

# SMOKE ALARM REMINDER

As of 24 April 2003, new regulations concerning the installation of automatic smoke detection and alarm systems in residential buildings came into effect.

All **new houses** and **consented alterations** must have smoke alarms installed. The Building Code amendment applies to all new houses now under construction, where there are house alterations that require a consent, and for a change of use when a building becomes a home and needs a building consent.

Note that whenever work is carried out on a dwelling requiring a building consent, the whole dwelling, not just the altered area, must be fitted out with smoke alarms.

## **Where do I need to install smoke alarms?**

Smoke alarms must be located on the escape routes on all levels within the house. Also, in areas where people sleep alarms must be located either:

- In every sleeping area, or
- Within 3.0 metres of every bedroom door. The alarms must be audible to sleeping occupants on the other side of the closed door.

Smoke alarms are to be installed on or near the ceiling, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

## **How can I check if a smoke alarm is an approved type?**

Smoke alarms may be battery powered and do not need to be interconnected. In addition, they must have a 'hush' facility with a 60-second minimum duration.

Check that the alarm has a test facility (usually a button or switch) that is easily accessible.

Also, check that the alarm is identified by at least one of the following compliance codes:

UL 217  
ULC S531  
AS 3786  
BS 5446 Part 1

## **How do I keep my smoke alarms in good working order?**

On a monthly basis:

- Confirm that the alarm still works by pressing the test facility located on the outside of the device. Replace dead batteries immediately.
- Gently vacuum the dust that gathers on the device. Do not take the alarm apart or off its mount to do this.

If you have any questions about smoke alarm regulations please contact the Department of Building and Housing. Phone: 0800 242 243 or (04) 471 0794. [www.dbh.govt.nz](http://www.dbh.govt.nz)