

# Maryland's Updated Smoke Alarm Law, January 2018

## Need for Change:

- An average 3,000 American die each year in home fires
- Nearly two-thirds of fire deaths occur in homes without working smoke alarms, mainly due to missing or dead batteries

The intent of the new Smoke Alarm Law was to transition away from smoke alarms with 9v batteries and to achieve as much reliable smoke alarm coverage as possible in older dwellings. Smoke alarm technology has advanced over the years and the updates to Maryland's Smoke Alarm Law are part of a nationwide trend to ensure new and replacement smoke alarms have the most effective technology available.



**The law requires the replacement of *BATTERY ONLY* operated smoke alarms with sealed 10 year lithium-ion battery smoke alarm with silent/hush feature.**

- Offers hassle-free protection for a decade (the life of the alarm)
- Eliminates low battery chirps and battery replacement
- Prohibits unauthorized tampering or battery removal
- Provides an alert after 10 years to replace the alarm



**The law requires the replacement of all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old. This applies to both hard-wired and battery-operated smoke alarms.**

- The date of manufacture, while sometimes hard to locate, should be printed on the back of smoke alarms. If no manufacture date can be located, the alarm is likely outdated and should be replaced to comply with the regulation.



**The law states that is never acceptable to remove required hard-wired smoke alarms and replace them with any type of battery-only operated device.**

- The new law heavily emphasizes the use of sealed smoke alarms with long-life batteries and silence/hush buttons. However, it is critical to understand that these devices are appropriate *ONLY* where battery-operated smoke alarms presently exist as permitted by Code or in locations where no smoke alarms are present .

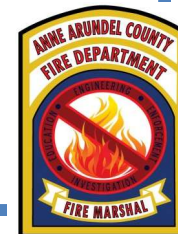
## For New Homes:



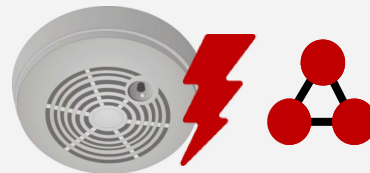
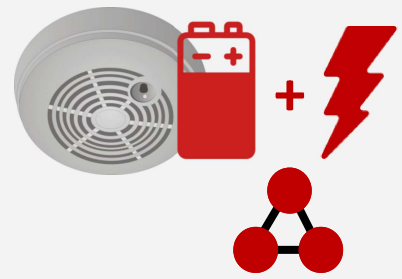
Maryland's Smoke Alarm Law has simply been updated to correspond with the International Residential Code and NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code. An AC powered, battery back-up smoke alarm is required in every bedroom, in the common area outside of the bedrooms, and on every other level of the dwelling unit. All of the required smoke alarms being interconnected.

## For Existing Homes:

The smoke alarm requirements for existing homes are based on WHEN the home was constructed. As a result, the requirements are sometimes confusing. Therefore it is critical to determine when the house was actually built to determine the level and type of smoke alarms required. *See other side.*

Anne Arundel County Fire Department  
Office of the Fire Marshal  
2660 Riva Road, Suite 290  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
410-222-7884



Homes built prior to July 1, 1975	Homes built Between July 1, 1975 and January 1, 1989	Homes built after January 1, 1989	Homes built after July 1, 1990
<p>Under the old law, for homes constructed prior to July 1, 1975, a smoke alarm was required outside each sleeping area. The smoke alarm could be battery operated or hardwired.</p> 	<p>For homes constructed between July 1, 1975 and June 30, 1990, an AC-powered smoke alarm was required in each sleeping area.</p> 	<p>For homes constructed after January 1, 1989 at least one hard-wired, AC-powered smoke alarm on every level of the home, including the basement and required that the units to be interconnected in order that activation of any one of the required smoke alarms resulted in the sounding of all the required smoke alarms.</p> 	<p>The requirement that all AC powered smoke alarms have a battery back-up became effective July 1, 1990</p> 
<p><b>To comply in 2018 and beyond</b></p> <p>Smoke alarms shall be upgraded to at least one approved smoke alarm on every level of the older home when one of the following occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existing alarm is more than 10 years old</li> <li>• The existing alarm malfunctions</li> <li>• There is a change of tenant</li> </ul> <p>• A building permit is issued for an addition or renovation</p> <p>Smoke alarms shall be hard-wired units except that sealed battery-operated smoke alarms with long-life batteries and silent/hush features may be installed in locations of the home where hard-wired smoke alarms did not previously exist.</p>		<p><b>To comply in 2018 and beyond</b></p> <p>Smoke alarms shall be replaced after 10 years from date of Manufacture. They must be interconnected , AC powered with battery back-up.</p> <p><b><i>The back-up battery is not required to be a 10 year long-life battery.</i></b></p>	

- **Does Maryland's new smoke alarm law affect real estate transactions?** Yes. The residential property disclosure form provided to the purchaser of specified single-family residential real property must include whether the smoke alarms (1) are over 10 years old and (2) if battery-operated, are sealed, tamper-resistant units incorporating a silence/hush button and use long-life batteries as required in all Maryland homes by 2018.
- **How does this affect landlords?** Landlords of one-and two-dwelling units also face new requirements. They must upgrade battery smoke alarms to new, 10-year sealed battery units whenever there's a change in occupancy or when those systems are 10 years old or malfunction. Landlords for buildings with more than two units also are affected. The legislation assigns tenants of those units responsibility for testing the smoke alarms and notifying their landlords of any problems. Where problems occur, the landlords are required to replace or repair the broken systems.