

Rhode Island Division of State Fire Marshal

Fire Safety Regulations



ONE-, TWO- AND THREE FAMILY DWELLINGS SMOKE ALARMS

- As of February 20, 2004 all new residential units require hard-wired, interconnected smoke alarms with battery back up in the following areas:
 - Outside each bedroom area
 - Inside each bed room
 - In each additional level including basements.
- In addition, an interconnected heat detector(s) shall be installed in all integral or attached garages in dwelling units permitted or constructed after **February 20, 2004**.
- Wireless detectors shall be allowed provided that they are monitored by an approved system or panel and provided that such system meets all the audible requirements.
- While not required, it is highly recommended to place an additional smoke alarm at the top of the basement stairs.
- Existing construction permitted after **June, 1976** are required to maintain the previously required smoke alarms and they should be hardwired and interconnected. *These detectors shall be located outside the bedroom areas and on each level.*
- If the above units do not have the previously required detectors they shall be allowed to have battery operated alarms.
- Three family dwellings shall have hardwired, interconnected smoke alarms installed by **July 1, 2008**. Interconnected common areas, separate from within each separate dwelling unit. (Also hard-wired)
- All other existing construction shall require smoke alarms outside each bedroom area and on each level. These will be permitted to be battery operated.

PLACEMENT OF SMOKE AND CO ALARMS

- Ceiling mounted: At least 4 inches from any adjoining wall surface
- Wall mounted: Between 4 and 12 inches from the ceiling
- Peaked or sloped ceilings: Within 36 inches of the peak or high side of the slope, but no closer than 4 inches vertically or from an adjoining wall surface.
- Detectors shall not be installed within 36 inches of heating or cooling register, the tip of a ceiling paddle fan, a kitchen door or a bathroom door containing a tub or shower.
- Detectors within a 20 foot horizontal path of a cooking appliance shall be equipped with an alarm-silencing means or be of the photo electric type.
- Where stairs lead to other occupied levels, a smoke alarm or smoke detector shall be located so that smoke rising in the stairway cannot be prevented from reaching the smoke alarm or smoke detector by an intervening door or obstruction.
- For stairways leading up from a basement, smoke alarms or smoke detectors shall be located on the basement ceiling near the entry to the stairs.
- Near the first bedroom door in a hallway closest to the living area.
- Carbon monoxide detectors shall be installed as per manufacturer's recommendations outside each sleeping area.

ONE-, TWO- AND THREE FAMILY DWELLINGS CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) DETECTORS

- All new residential (including apartments and condominiums) require hard-wired, interconnected CO alarms with battery back up outside the bedroom areas.
- In addition, the local authority having jurisdiction may require additional smoke or CO coverage in rooms or living areas having pull out sofas or other means of sleeping arrangements if in his/her judgment the room may be used for sleeping quarters on a regular or intermittent basis.
- Any dwelling permitted after **January 1, 2002** shall be required to have hardwired CO alarms with battery backup.
- All other existing construction shall be allowed to have battery operated CO alarms or plug in units. Plug in units must be restrained.
- Exception: Dwellings that do not contain any fuel burning appliances, a fireplace or an attached or integrated garage are exempt from CO requirements. If any of these items is introduced later than detection is required.

APARTMENTS/TOWNHOUSES/CONDOMINIUMS

- Each dwelling unit shall comply with all of the requirements of one and two family dwellings for smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
- In addition, every building meeting this definition having between four and seven units shall be required to have a local fire alarm system that will include detection in all common areas, pull stations and occupant notification.
- Every building meeting this definition having more than seven units shall be required to have a municipally connected fire alarm system.
 - Exception: 1) Buildings that have units with suitable fire resistance separation may be exempt from fire alarm system requirements.
 - Exception: 2) Buildings that have central heating plants that do not transfer heat via ductwork, and that have suitable separation from the rest of the building, and where dwelling units do not have any other fuel burning appliances, fireplaces or attached or integral garages, than they may be exempt from CO requirements.
- Contact your local Fire Marshal for compliance information:

STATE FIRE MARSHAL
24 CONWAY AVENUE
NORTH KINGSTOWN, RI 02852

DAYS: 401-294-0861
24 Hr. 401-222-2331
FAX#: 401-295-9092
TTD#: 401-295-9078

Fire Marshal's Web Site
<http://www.fire-marshal.ri.gov>

Fire Safety Code Web Site
<http://www.fsc.ri.gov>

OTHER FACTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- All detectors and devices shall be installed according to manufacturer's recommendations.
- Smoke alarms shall not remain in service longer than 10 years from the date of installation unless otherwise specified by the manufacturer.
- It shall be the responsibility of the owner to maintain in operable condition smoke and carbon monoxide detection systems, installed as required pursuant to this chapter, and the owner shall make operable, within seven (7) days after being notified by certified mail by the occupant and/or enforcement official, any inoperable system.
- The cost of inspection (\$30.00) shall be borne by the seller.
- Owners of existing residential properties, previously required to install smoke detectors, shall maintain those detectors in good operating condition.
- The above smoke and carbon monoxide detectors may be installed as either separate or combination units approved by the AHJ.
- The fire department for the community in which the dwelling is located must inspect the smoke and carbon monoxide detector systems of the dwelling within ten (10) days of a request from the owner.
- Once received smoke alarm and CO certificates are good for 60 days.
- It is recommended that you have your inspection scheduled at least 2 weeks before your closing to allow time for any necessary corrections.