



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

100 East Eleventh Street

Saint Paul, MN 55101

Telephone: 651-228-6230

Facsimile: 651-228-6241

HARD-WIRED SMOKE DETECTOR FACT SHEET

DO SMOKE DETECTORS WORK?

YES. Data compiled by the National Fire Protection Association demonstrates that a person who has a home fire and does not have an (operable) smoke detector is twice as likely to die in that fire as another person who suffers the same fire, but is protected by (operable) detectors.

WHAT DOES THE HARD-WIRED SMOKE DETECTOR ORDINANCE REQUIRE?

Since 1973, the State building code has required that all new homes be provided with a hard-wired smoke detector. And since March 20, 1995, a hard-wired smoke detector with battery back-up is required outside the sleeping area of the home. This Hard-wired Smoke Detector Ordinance, which became effective in November of 1988, provides that homes in Saint Paul built even before 1973 have one of these reliable smoke detectors outside the sleeping area. Installation and inspection are required within 60 days of receiving notification from Fire Prevention, whether or not the home is sold. (Remodeling projects have entirely different requirements in the Building Code.)

WHY HARD-WIRED SMOKE DETECTORS WITH BATTERY BACK-UP?

Battery-powered smoke detectors became popular in the 1970's as inexpensive life-safety devices. Now that these detectors have been in some homes for such a long time, they are no longer being maintained as they need to be. Unfortunately, experience is showing us that many people do not keep fresh batteries in their detectors and some even remove the batteries altogether.

Only 74 percent of households in the United States even have smoke detectors. A survey by the United States Fire Administration reveals that 25 to 35 percent of those smoke detectors do not work. Almost all of the smoke detector failures were due to non-functioning or missing batteries. On the other hand, hard-wired smoke detectors rarely suffer a power interruption. **To provide the best protection, a combination hard-wired detector with battery back-up is required.**

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INSTALLING?

The seller of the home is responsible for installation and inspection of the hard-wired smoke detector with battery back-up.

(Over)

HOW DO I COMPLY?

- Obtain an electrical permit from the Department of Safety and Inspections (651-266-9090) to install your own detector. If you hire an electrician, be sure they obtain a permit.
- Install the detector in the correct position outside the sleeping area and wire it into a nearby circuit that is not controlled by a wall switch. You do not have to wire the smoke detector all the way to your electrical panel.
- Once the detector is installed, contact the Department of Safety and Inspections for a final inspection appointment. This is required to be done within 60 days.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

- The hard-wired smoke detector with battery back-up is comparable in cost to some battery-powered detectors.
- The total cost to have an electrician install your detector averages about \$200.
- An owner may install his/her own detector for less.
- The cost of the electrical permit from the Department of Safety and Inspections (651-266-9090) is \$39.50.

WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU NEED MORE TIME TO INSTALL?

If you need more time beyond the 60 days for installation of the detector, call Fire Prevention (651-228-6230) to request an extension of time.

WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOUR HOME IS SOLD BEFORE RECEIVING INSTALLATION REQUIREMENT LETTER?

- If your home has been sold and the detector has **NOT BEEN INSTALLED**, it is the seller's obligation to arrange for installation and inspection with the new homeowner.
- If your home has been sold and the detector has been installed but **NOT INSPECTED**, it is the seller's obligation to arrange between themselves and the new homeowner for an inspection.

WHAT IF THE HOME DOES NOT SELL OR IS TAKEN OFF THE MARKET?

Installation of the detector is required within 60 days of receiving the installation requirement letter whether or not the home sells.

WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOUR TRUTH-IN-SALE OF HOUSING EVALUATION IS WRONG?

If the Truth-in-Sale of Housing evaluator made an error in their inspection, you must contact the evaluator to file an amendment with the Truth-in-Sale of Housing staff at 651-266-8440. Truth-in-Sale of Housing will notify Fire Prevention of the amendment.

WHAT IF THE HOME IS FOR SALE, BUT VACANT?

If the home has not been sold and is vacant, call Fire Prevention to request an extension of time. A hard-wired smoke detector with battery back-up is required to be installed within 60 days.