



Maryland's Updated Smoke Alarm Law

When: The new law was placed into effect on January 1, 2018.

What: The law requires the replacement of battery-only operated smoke alarms with units by sealed 10 year lithium-ion battery smoke alarms with a silence/hush button feature

Why: The Smoke Alarm Law creates a transition away from 9-volt battery-operated smoke alarms to the 10 year lithium-ion battery smoke alarms in an effort to achieve more reliable smoke alarm coverage in older dwellings.

Who: Smoke alarms that are battery operated and presently exist by code or locations where there are no smoke alarms present. It is never acceptable to remove required hard-wired smoke alarms and replace them with any type of battery-only operated devices.

Also: Maryland's Smoke Alarm Law also requires the replacement of all smoke alarms 10 years from the manufacturers date on the back of the alarm, applying to both hard-wired and battery-operated smoke alarms. If the manufacturers date cannot be found, the alarm is most-likely outdated and needs to be replaced. Please see example below.

For existing homes:

Smoke alarm requirements for existing homes are based on when the home was constructed. NFPA only requires smoke alarms outside each sleeping area and one on each level of the home. It also recommends that existing homes be equipped with the same number of smoke alarms required inside all sleeping rooms. The department's position is consistent with the recommendation for new home construction.

For new construction:

New construction in Maryland has been updated and corresponds 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 required smoke alarms will be interconnected.

Homes built after January 1st, 1989:

Battery operated smoke alarms must be replaced or upgraded with longlife, sealed smoke alarms that also come equipped with a hush feature.

Homes Constructed Between July 1st, 1975 and June 30th, 1990:

Smoke alarms should be replaced after 10 years of service and be AC powered with a battery back-up.

Homes constructed prior to July 1st, 1975: Homes are required 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 required alarms.

Maryland's new Smoke Alarm Law is part of the Public Safety Article, Sections 9-101 through 9-109.