

Frederick County, Maryland Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Matrix

Requirements, Installation and location of alarms

Minimum location requirements:

- 1) Outside each sleeping area (unless built after July 1, 2013, see new construction matrix for additional locations)
- 2) On each level if dwelling is multi-level (includes basements)
- 3) To ensure maximum protection, install a smoke alarm inside each sleeping room
- 4) It is recommended that when replacing or installing hard-wired smoke alarms w/ battery backup that they too be the type incorporating a 10 year sealed-in battery as the backup. Less maintenance and more reliable.
- 5) Required Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarms may be combination Smoke/CO Alarms, however all powering requirements still apply.

Maintenance

- 1) Monthly – using test button, check smoke alarms to ensure they are working as recommended by the manufacturer
- 2) Replace the 9-volt backup battery in hard-wired units every 6 months. Refer to # 4 above when it's time to replace these units.
- 3) Replace smoke alarms that are not functioning or have reached ten years of age. Smoke alarms do not last forever and units that are 10 years old have reached the end of their service life and shall be replaced.
- 4) Both hard-wired and battery-operated alarms are equally affected by age. Just like any electrical appliance, the circuitry, components and sensors in smoke alarms go bad over time.
- 5) When a smoke alarm reaches 10 years of age, the potential of failing to detect a fire increases substantially and replacing units every 10 years reduces the likelihood of failure.

Residential Sprinkler Systems

Nothing in the new law is intended to imply that smoke alarms are an adequate substitute for residential sprinkler protection. The combination of properly located and functioning smoke alarms along with a properly designed residential sprinkler protection system provides the greatest potential for surviving a fire in your home.

Additional Information

- 1) Smoke and CO alarms that are tied to an approved fire alarm control panel or household fire alarm system and installed in the specified locations are not affected by this law. These systems must have a functioning battery back-up.
- 2) There are manufacturers offering battery-only operated alarms with "long-life" replaceable lithium batteries. These DO NOT meet the requirements of the law because the batteries are, not sealed in.
- 3) Several manufacturers now offer wireless technology in alarms that do meet the requirements. This enables the alarms to work like interconnected alarms in new construction without the wires meaning if one alarm activates they all activate. A great option that affords you the best protection in older homes.
- 4) Whether purchasing new alarms or researching your current alarms we recommend you check the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Recall List to make sure the alarms you have or may be considering are not on their recall list. Go to this website: <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls> and type "Smoke Alarms" or "CO Alarms" in the search window and scroll through list of recalled alarms.

If you have any questions about this or any other fire code related matter please contact the Fire Marshal at: 301-600-1479