

Oregon smoke alarm law reminder

Oregon laws require all homes being sold or rented to have working smoke alarms.

What types of smoke alarms are available?

There are two types of smoke alarms: photoelectric and ionization. There are also dual-sensing ionization and photoelectric and combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms available.

- If ionization alarms are solely battery-operated, they shall be packaged with a 10-year battery and include a hush mechanism.

Are battery-operated or hardwired smoke alarms required?

Smoke alarm power source (battery or hardwired) requirements are based on the applicable building codes at the time of construction or alteration.

- If battery only alarms were installed at the time of construction, they can be replaced with battery only alarms.
- If hardwired alarms were installed at the time of construction, they must be replaced with hardwired alarms.

When should smoke alarms be replaced?

Replace smoke alarms when recommended by the manufacturer, when they fail to respond to operability tests, or 10 years from the date of manufacture.

Where should smoke alarms be installed?

Smoke alarms should be installed:

- On each level of the home, including the basement.
- Where sleeping areas are located on an upper level, the smoke alarm shall be installed as close as practical to the center of the ceiling directly over the stairway.
- Outside sleeping areas, within the immediate vicinity of each bedroom or within 21 feet of the bedroom.
- Where sleeping areas are widely separated and/or where a single smoke alarm will not adequately service all sleeping areas, a smoke alarm shall be installed adjacent to each sleeping area.
- In each sleeping room as per the requirements of the applicable building codes at the time of construction.
- In accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Some local ordinances have additional requirements.

Smoke alarms in rentals – landlord and tenant responsibilities

The landlord is responsible for installing properly functioning smoke alarms per the requirements above, maintaining them, providing written testing instructions, and providing working batteries at the beginning of tenancy.

The tenant is responsible for testing the smoke alarms at least once every six months, replacing batteries as needed, notifying the landlord in writing of operating deficiencies, and is prohibited from removing or tampering with the alarms. Tenants should refer to the lease/rental agreement for specific instructions on battery replacement.

Contact your local building code department for specific requirements.