



Fact Sheet on: Smoke Alarms

Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal

Bruce Rauner, Governor • Matt Perez, State Fire Marshal

April 2016

What a Single-Family Homeowner Needs to Know About the Detectors Act

The Smoke Detector Act (425 ILCS 60/) addresses the requirement for smoke alarms ¹ in one- and two-family homes. Smoke alarms shall be provided as follows:

- Within 15 feet of every room used for sleeping purposes.
- On every story of the dwelling unit, including basements but not including unoccupied attics.

The detector shall be installed on the ceiling and at least 6 inches from any wall, or on a wall located between 4 and 6 inches from the ceiling.

For dwelling units with split levels, a smoke alarm shall be installed on the upper level if the lower level is less than one full story below the upper level; however, if there is an intervening door between the adjacent levels, a smoke detector shall be installed on each level.

For dwelling units in existence on July 1, 1988 smoke alarms may be battery-powered or wired into the building's electrical system and need not be interconnected.

For dwelling units newly constructed, reconstructed, or substantially remodeled after December 31, 1987, the smoke alarms shall be permanently wired into the building's electrical system and if more than one smoke alarm is required, the smoke alarms shall be wired so that the initiation of one smoke alarm will initiate all the smoke alarms in the dwelling unit.

For any dwelling units newly constructed, reconstructed, or substantially remodeled after January 1, 2011 smoke alarms permanently wired into the building's electrical system must also maintain an alternative back-up power source, which may be either batteries or an emergency generator.

¹For the purpose of this document in reflection of the Act; the terms "detector" and "alarm" are interchangeable and mean a device that senses smoke and produces a localized alarm.