



## **SMOKE DETECTOR BASICS**

**JUNEAU PERMIT CENTER, 4TH FLOOR MARINE VIEW CENTER, (907) 586-0770**

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**The biggest threat to loss of life in a fire is at home at night, when everyone is asleep.** Smoke usually will not awaken you but will cause you to sleep harder and then suffocate you. Smoke is the real killer in house fires; not flames.

In 1994, 31 people died in fires in Alaska. Of those, 25 deaths were in homes!

The Building Code requires that smoke detectors be located in places where people sleep and in the area outside the bedroom doors. Detectors must be loud enough to awaken sleeping people anywhere in the dwelling.

So in the event that there is a considerable distance or an obstacle, such as several levels, between these required smoke detectors, the detectors shall be interconnected.

**IN HOUSES AND APARTMENTS**, smoke detectors are now required inside the individual bedrooms. In addition, smoke detectors must be located in a hall or other area adjacent to and outside of the bedroom doors. There must be a smoke detector on each level, including basements.

**IN EFFICIENCY APARTMENTS AND HOTELS**, a smoke detector is required to be provided in the sleeping room, either on the wall or the ceiling.

**IN AREAS OF NEW CONSTRUCTION**, the smoke detectors are required to be wired in to the building's electrical system (AC) with battery back-up (DC).

**WHEN REMODELING EXISTING BUILDINGS**, generally AC smoke detectors with battery back-up are required. However, if either of the following are true, battery operated detectors are acceptable in that area: 1. if no construction occurs in the area or 2. if the value of the remodeling is less than \$1,000 and no new bedrooms are created.

**IN EXISTING BUILDINGS**, where no construction activity occurs, smoke detectors are still required but they may be battery operated only. If you have an attic or easy access to wiring then they can be wired to the dwellings electrical system (AC) with battery back-up (DC) without removing any wall coverings.

**PLACEMENT** The fire service recommends placing smoke detectors high on the wall or near the center of the ceiling but not within 10 inches of the wall/ceiling junction. See the manufacturer's recommendation for specifics.

Whenever a building inspector visits your property, he or she will likely verify that the smoke detectors are in place and in working order since this is defined as a life-safety code requirement which applies to all dwellings, existing and new.

**Remember, once a detector sounds, on average you have less than 2 minutes to escape.**

**SMOKE DETECTORS SAVE LIVES!!!**

## RESIDENTIAL

### Smoke Detectors Required:

#### **New Construction:**

- Interconnected A/C with D/C backup:
  - a) each floor (including basement)
  - b) outside sleeping area(s)
  - c) inside each sleeping room, study, den, any room greater than 70 sq. ft., etc.

#### **Additions:**

- A/C with D/C backup for new or remodeled bedroom, den, study, etc.
- Any type OK in balance of house, in locations a-c above.

#### **Remodel:**

- A/C with D/C backup for new or remodeled bedroom, den, study, etc.
- Any type OK in balance of house, in locations a-c above.

#### **Mobile Homes:**

- Older than 1994: Any type OK, in locations a-c above.
- 1994 and newer: A/C (with or without D/C backup) outside sleeping area(s), and any type OK inside each bedroom, study, den, etc.

#### **Rewiring a House:**

- Same as new construction.

References: 2006 IBC Section 907.2, 2006 IRC Section R313 and CBJ Title 19