



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

100 East Eleventh Street

Saint Paul, MN 55101

Telephone: 651-228-6230

Facsimile: 651-228-6241

HARD-WIRED SMOKE DETECTOR FACT SHEET

DO SMOKE DETECTORS WORK?

YES. Data compiled by the National Fire Protection Association demonstrates that a person who has a home fire and does not have an (operable) smoke detector is twice as likely to die in that fire as another person who suffers the same fire, but is protected by (operable) detectors.

WHAT DOES THE HARD-WIRED SMOKE DETECTOR ORDINANCE REQUIRE?

Since 1973, the State building code has required that all new homes be provided with a hard-wired smoke detector. And since March 20, 1995, a hard-wired smoke detector with battery back-up is required outside the sleeping area of the home. This Hard-wired Smoke Detector Ordinance, which became effective in November of 1988, provides that homes in Saint Paul built even before 1973 have one of these reliable smoke detectors outside the sleeping area. Installation and inspection are required within 60 days of receiving notification from Fire Prevention, whether or not the home is sold. (Remodeling projects have entirely different requirements in the Building Code.)

WHY HARD-WIRED SMOKE DETECTORS WITH BATTERY BACK-UP?

Battery-powered smoke detectors became popular in the 1970's as inexpensive life-safety devices. Now that these detectors have been in some homes for such a long time, they are no longer being maintained as they need to be. Unfortunately, experience is showing us that many people do not keep fresh batteries in their detectors and some even remove the batteries altogether.

Only 74 percent of households in the United States even have smoke detectors. A survey by the United States Fire Administration reveals that 25 to 35 percent of those smoke detectors do not work. Almost all of the smoke detector failures were due to non-functioning or missing batteries. On the other hand, hard-wired smoke detectors rarely suffer a power interruption. **To provide the best protection, a combination hard-wired detector with battery back-up is required.**

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INSTALLING?

The seller of the home is responsible for installation and inspection of the hard-wired smoke detector with battery back-up.

(Over)

HOW DO I COMPLY?

- Obtain an electrical permit from the Department of Safety and Inspections (651-266-9090) to install your own detector. If you hire an electrician, be sure they obtain a permit.
- Install the detector in the correct position outside the sleeping area and wire it into a nearby circuit that is not controlled by a wall switch. You do not have to wire the smoke detector all the way to your electrical panel.
- Once the detector is installed, contact the Department of Safety and Inspections for a final inspection appointment. This is required to be done within 60 days.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

- The hard-wired smoke detector with battery back-up is comparable in cost to some battery-powered detectors.
- The total cost to have an electrician install your detector averages about \$200.
- An owner may install his/her own detector for less.
- The cost of the electrical permit from the Department of Safety and Inspections (651-266-9090) is \$43.00.

WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU NEED MORE TIME TO INSTALL?

If you need more time beyond the 60 days for installation of the detector, call Fire Prevention (651-228-6230) to request an extension of time.

WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOUR HOME IS SOLD BEFORE RECEIVING INSTALLATION REQUIREMENT LETTER?

- If your home has been sold and the detector has **NOT BEEN INSTALLED**, it is the seller's obligation to arrange for installation and inspection with the new homeowner.
- If your home has been sold and the detector has been installed but **NOT INSPECTED**, it is the seller's obligation to arrange between themselves and the new homeowner for an inspection.

WHAT IF THE HOME DOES NOT SELL OR IS TAKEN OFF THE MARKET?

Installation of the detector is required within 60 days of receiving the installation requirement letter whether or not the home sells.

WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOUR TRUTH-IN-SALE OF HOUSING EVALUATION IS WRONG?

If the Truth-in-Sale of Housing evaluator made an error in their inspection, you must contact the evaluator to file an amendment with the Truth-in-Sale of Housing staff at 651-266-1900. Truth-in-Sale of Housing will notify Fire Prevention of the amendment.

WHAT IF THE HOME IS FOR SALE, BUT VACANT?

If the home has not been sold and is vacant, call Fire Prevention to request an extension of time. A hard-wired smoke detector with battery back-up is required to be installed within 60 days.

City of Saint Paul Truth-in-Sale of Housing Program

HARD-WIRED SMOKE DETECTOR INSTALLATION GUIDELINES PER HARD-WIRED SMOKE DETECTOR WITH BATTERY BACK-UP ORDINANCE

Contact the Fire Prevention Office for clarification, more information, or other questions. This flyer is distributed by the Department of Safety and Inspections, Truth-in-Sale of Housing Program as a courtesy only. The information herein is copied from the Fire Department publication and is not intended to substitute for official information from that department.

If you are selling your single-family home in the City of Saint Paul, you **must** have a 120 volt hard-wired battery back-up smoke detector installed within 60 days after notice from the Fire Department in order to satisfy the Hard-Wired Smoke Detector with Battery Back-up Ordinance, Chapter 58 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code. **The following guidelines are to assist if you, as the homeowner, are applying for the permit and installing the detector yourself:**

Only one detector, mounted in the hallway outside the bedrooms, is required to satisfy the ordinance. Additional detectors do increase your level of safety, but are not mandatory.

1. If all the bedrooms in the home are on one level, the detector must be mounted in the hallway (not in a stairwell) outside of the bedrooms.
2. Install the detector as far away from the bathroom as possible. (Steam can make the detector go off.)
3. If you have legal bedrooms on more than one level, the detector must be mounted as follows:
 - The detector should be installed on the level with the **MOST** bedrooms. If, for example, you have three bedrooms on one level and one on the other, the detector must be mounted on the level with the three bedrooms.
 - If you have an equal number of bedrooms on more than one floor, the detector must be installed on the upper level with bedrooms. For example, if your home has two bedrooms on the first floor and two on the second, the detector must be installed on the second floor.
 - If the detector must be mounted on the upper level where there is only **ONE** bedroom occupying the **ENTIRE LEVEL**, mount at top of stairs on ceiling parallel to the floor.

The detector may be mounted on the wall or ceiling. The **BEST** location is in the center of the ceiling, but if the construction of the home prohibits ceiling mount, it may be wall-mounted. **READ THE DIRECTIONS THAT COME WITH THE DETECTOR** - they will give certain measurements that must be followed for the distance down from the ceiling for a wall-mounted detector.

The power for the detector may be tapped from any **UNSWITCHED** power source. The detector **CANNOT** be put on a separate circuit. This will mean taking power from an outlet or from a lighting circuit ahead of any switches (be careful of getting power from a ceiling light). This tap from the power must be done in an electrical box (the box that a device such as a switch, outlet, or light fixture is mounted on). **DO NOT CONNECT TO ANY OPEN WIRING OUTSIDE OF THESE BOXES.**

The most popular method of running power from the existing electrical box to the new box you install for the detector is NM-B cable or Romex. Romex must be fished inside of a wall or ceiling. It **CANNOT** be run on the outside of a wall, floor, or ceiling without mechanical protection.

This cable is run through a knockout or opening in the side or back of the electrical boxes. Some type of cable clamp or bushing is required where the cable goes through the knockout. There are several brands of plastic boxes available for remodeling work that have ears to hold the box in place in the wall, and that have integral cable clamps to hold the Romex.

**City of Saint Paul
Truth-in-Sale of Housing Program**

THE SMOKE DETECTOR MUST BE MOUNTED ON AN ELECTRICAL BOX. When the box is cut into the ceiling or wall, the opening must be flush with the ceiling or wall surface. You should be able to see the electrical box opening when the detector is detached from the box. You **MUST** use a plastic insulated type wire connector (such as the 3M *Scotchlock*) for any wire splices - twisting the wires together and taping the bare wires is **NOT** acceptable..

Mount the detector on the box before the permit inspection takes place. The inspector will disassemble anything they need to look at and reassemble when finished. Call your inspector for the final inspection - his/her name and direct number is on your copy of the permit. If you cannot find your copy, please call the Electrical Inspection general number (651-266-9003) between 7:30 and 9:00 a.m. Monday through Friday and they will transfer you to the inspector that covers your area.

Please note: Major remodeling projects will have different requirements from the Building Department. **THESE GUIDELINES ARE FOR THE HARD-WIRED SMOKE DETECTOR WITH BATTERY BACK-UP ORDINANCE ONLY.**

*City of Saint Paul
Department of Fire and Safety Services
Division of Fire Prevention
Telephone: 651-228-6230*

Contact the Fire Prevention Office for clarification, more information, or other questions. This flyer is distributed by the Department of Safety and Inspections, Division of Code Enforcement, Truth-in-Sale of Housing Program as a courtesy only. The information herein is copied from the Fire Department publication and is not intended to substitute for official information from that department.

*Hwsd.install
(Revised 5/07)*