

IMPORTANT!

SMOKE ALARMS AND CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

REQUIREMENTS FOR SMOKE ALARMS AND CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide alarms are required by the State of California for all Building Permits.

The smoke and carbon monoxide alarms will be the first thing inspected at final inspection. Please make sure we have access to the interior of the building. It is advised to have the alarms in place and have them inspected on the first inspection. If the alarm inspection fails, they should be ready on the next inspection. If the alarms fail at the time of the second or any subsequent inspection, a re-inspection fee of \$144.00 will be assessed for each failed inspection.

Most homeowners are unaware of the correct location for the alarms. The contractor should give the homeowner the necessary information required about locations, or help with installation. The alarms are required to be fastened/mounted to the wall or ceiling. Please have them in place before inspection.

Please note: Older smoke alarms do not have carbon monoxide capability. If the unit has both functions, it will be clearly labeled on the cover.

Battery powered or plug in units with battery backup are permitted unless the room or area is new, being re-wired, or has existing hardwired smoke alarms (see below).

REQUIRED LOCATIONS OF CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

- ◆ A Carbon Monoxide Alarm is required outside of each bedroom area in the immediate vicinity of the bedroom(s), not down the hall in the next room.
- ◆ If an alarm that plugs into the wall and has battery backup is to be used, make sure there is an electric outlet in the area directly outside the bedroom before purchasing the unit, you may need a battery-only unit. The alarm is required to be in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms, not down the hall in another room.
- ◆ A Carbon Monoxide Alarm is required on every level of a dwelling unit including basements (*three-story home = minimum of 3 Carbon Monoxide Alarms*). Homes with split levels require a carbon monoxide alarm on each level.
- ◆ If there are bedrooms at opposite ends of the building on the same level, each area outside the bedrooms will require its own alarm.
- ◆ Carbon monoxide alarms are not required inside bedrooms, only smoke alarms.

REQUIRED LOCATIONS OF SMOKE ALARMS

- ◆ A Smoke Alarm is required in each bedroom.
- ◆ A Smoke Alarm is required outside of each bedroom area, in the immediate vicinity of the bedroom(s), not down the hall in the next room.
- ◆ One Smoke Alarm is required on each level. Homes with split levels require a smoke alarm on each level.
- ◆ Any room with a closet, regardless of use, is considered a bedroom.
- ◆ If there are bedrooms at opposite ends of the building on the same level, each area outside the bedrooms will require its own alarm.

HARDWIRED ALARMS

Present code requires hard wired smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are to also have a battery backup in each alarm. There are some older homes that have hardwired smoke alarms with no battery backup. There are also home security companies that remove the units with battery backup that were installed at time of construction, and replace them with proprietary units that do not have the battery backup in each alarm. Both these types of installations do not meet present code. Please check each individual unit for a battery. If the unit has no battery backup, and the electric power fails or the security company is not paid, the alarms are non-functional. Battery backup is required if the units are hardwired.

Bottom line: If the home has hardwired alarms, the present requirement is to install units that are hardwired with battery backup and have both smoke alarm and carbon monoxide capability on each level and outside the bedrooms. Having a hardwired smoke alarm and a separate battery powered carbon monoxide alarm is prohibited. If the home only has a partial installation of hardwire alarms, areas that are not hardwired may use battery type units.

You will not be required to open walls etc., to install hardwire alarms, unless the area is opened for other reasons or if additions are made.

BATTERY BACKUP

Please note: The batteries are required to be located in the individual alarms. The remote battery located with the security system equipment and supplied by any security company does not meet the battery backup requirement.

Any area that is remodeled or added, and the ceiling opened, will require hardwired Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms in the required locations.

If you are not clear after reading this, please call 650/599-7311 and ask to speak with a Building Inspector. The best time to call is from 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. and from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.