



# Smoke Alarms and Fire Safety

## What is a smoke alarm?

A smoke alarm is an essential fire safety device for every home. As an early warning device the smoke alarm is designed to detect smoke and alert building occupants to the presence of a fire. It is usually located on the hall ceiling near to bedrooms. When a fire is detected it will give off a loud shrill noise which is designed to wake a sleeping person

## Is it OK to interfere with the smoke alarm?

It is against the law to remove or interfere with the operation of a smoke alarm. From 1 May 2006, an on-the-spot fine of \$200 is provided for in relation to any person removing or interfering with an installed smoke alarm (except to repair, maintain or replace the alarm).

During routine property inspections our staff will visually inspect your smoke alarm and test it using the test button. If it fails to sound or appears damaged in any way, we will arrange for our qualified electrician to service it. If you want to, you can also test the alarm yourself once a month using the test button, simply press the test

button gently and hold for five seconds. Never tamper with a smoke alarm. If you suspect the alarm may not be working or if it is repeatedly giving 'false alarms' (e.g. triggered by cooking), you should call Housing Plus on 1800 603 300 to report the problem.

## How can I maintain the smoke alarm?

Most properties managed by Housing Plus are fitted with hard wired smoke alarms with an inbuilt non removable battery that powers the alarm if the electricity supply is interrupted. You should not try to open these alarms.

Some homes (e.g. leaseholds) may still be fitted with battery powered alarms. If you live in one of these properties it is a good idea to change the battery once every year. Never remove the battery unless you have another one to replace it with immediately.

For both types of alarm you should carefully vacuum the smoke alarm several times a year to remove dust, cobwebs or insects. Insects may be attracted to smoke alarms and can sound the alarm. If this occurs,

spray the ceiling around the alarm with insect surface spray. Never spray the alarm directly.

Other activities such as cooking, showering and smoking may sound the alarm from time to time. If this occurs fan the alarm with a magazine (or similar object). To reduce this type of false alarm make sure you ventilate your home well.

## You may notice two different lights on your smoke alarm:

- + a steady green light indicates that the alarm is being powered
- + a red light flashes once a minute to indicate that the alarm is working.

## Looking for more info?

-  Contact your local Housing Plus office
-  Visit [housingplus.com.au](https://www.housingplus.com.au)
-  Call us on 1800 603 300

## Fire Safety Tips

- + Be aware that smoke from a fire can cause you to become confused and that you cannot see in smoke.
- + If you have escaped from a home fire, remember once you get outside to stay out and dial Triple Zero (000).
- + Include your children with fire escape planning and practice escape plans regularly.
- + If a family member or visitor has hearing or mobility problems ensure that these are taken into account and if necessary that someone is assigned to help them escape.
- + If you or one of your family are hearing impaired, speak to Housing Plus staff who will arrange to have a suitable smoke alarm installed.
- + If a kitchen fire occurs and you don't feel confident you can put it out, switch off the appliance (if safe), leave the premises and call the fire service on Triple Zero (000) from a safe place outside of the premises.
- + Keep the door keys handy at all times. Never leave the front or back doors deadlocked. When at home, leave the keys in the deadlocks.
- + All Housing Plus properties should be fitted with night-latches that cannot be locked with a key on the inside, if you don't have this type of lock please contact Housing Plus Repairs.
- + Heavy sleepers, such as children and those affected by alcohol or drugs may not hear the alarm. You might need to offer assistance. If a family member has a hearing or mobility problem, assign someone to help them. Hearing impaired tenants can have a personal vibrating alarm and strobe light connected to their smoke alarm.



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