

Oregon's Smoke Alarm Law

ORS 479.257A

*****IMPORTANT*** These smoke alarms MUST replace your existing alarms before you close escrow!**

As of January 1, 2002, the Oregon Smoke Alarm Requirements went into effect. Ionization smoke alarms that include a hush feature and, if solely battery-powered, a ten-year battery, are required when a dwelling is sold. Additionally, smoke alarms need to be installed according to Oregon building code and Administrative Rules.

Here are some tips on identifying smoke detectors and excerpts from the rules:

Hush Button Feature

- ✓ Required on all units
- ✓ Is it a self-resetting type? Hush Button can only be silenced for a maximum period of 15 minutes.
 - If you remove the cover to silence the unit, it is not a Hush Button unit
 - And must be replaced
- ✓ If NO Hush Button – Replace the Unit!

Solid Wire Connection

- ✓ Must have a backup battery, generally a regular 9 volt battery, 10 year battery is not required
- ✓ Must be continuously connected to 110-volt power (not acceptable to be plugged into an outlet)
- ✓ Must have a Hush Button feature

Battery Only Units

- ✓ Must have a lithium power cell, 10 year battery
- ✓ Must have Hush Button feature

Alarm System with Smoke Detectors

- ✓ Must have a silencing feature – able to be temporarily silenced and automatically reset

Exemptions

- ✓ Photoelectric smoke alarms, which activate a photocell to trigger the alarm
- ✓ Multipurpose alarms, such as combination smoke/fire/carbon monoxide alarms

Tips to Identify a Unit

- ✓ Two buttons and a continuously lit light
 - Unit is likely a solid wire with a Hush Button
 - The correct type
- ✓ One button and a light
 - No Hush Feature
 - Replace the unit
- ✓ No test or Hush Button
 - Replace the unit
- ✓ Buzzer sound – a buzzer sound indicates the unit does not have a battery backup



Replace the unit

- ✓ High pitch chirp or warble – indicates a battery or battery backup unit
 - Check the battery, should have a lithium power cell 10-year battery installed if battery only unit

Maintenance Tips

- ✓ Replace any ionization smoke detector that is 10 or more years old (most are dated) they become less effective with age
- ✓ Replace the batteries regularly, at least yearly (we recommend batteries be changed for the transaction)
- ✓ 10-year battery units should be replaced when the battery dies
- ✓ Replace any unit that has been exposed to a fire or excessive smoke

***You can purchase these inexpensively at Jerry's or Home Depot**

***Please call us if you need assistance with this**



Oregon State law (ORS 479.260) requires that when you sell your home, all smoke alarms must meet the following requirements.

All ionization smoke alarms must have a hush feature and if solely battery powered must also have a ten-year battery.

What are the requirements of January 1, 2002?

- **Tenant occupied spaces:** All tenant occupied dwellings shall have approved smoke alarms. If ionization, they shall include a hush feature and if battery-powered, they shall include ten-year batteries.
- **Sale of dwelling unit:** Prior to the sale of any dwelling or structure containing a dwelling, the dwellings shall meet the same requirements.

What types of alarms does Oregon law require?

- All ionization smoke alarms sold in Oregon are required to have the hush feature. Solely battery-powered ionization alarms sold in Oregon must be packaged and sold with a ten-year battery.

What types of alarms are exempt?

- Photoelectric smoke alarms are exempt from these requirements.
- Multipurpose alarms; such as, combination smoke and fire/carbon monoxide alarms, are exempt from these requirements.
- **Fire alarm systems** do not require the hush feature and ten-year battery.



What about 110 v (hard-wired) smoke alarms? Do they have to have the hush feature and ten-year battery back up?

- All ionization smoke alarms not connected to a commercial fire alarm system, whether 110 v (hard-wired) or solely battery operated, need to have a hush feature.
- Only ionization smoke alarms that are solely battery operated need to have a ten-year battery.

Can I replace my 110 v (hard-wired) smoke alarms with solely battery operated smoke alarms?

- No, you can not replace a 110 v (hard-wired) system with a solely battery operated smoke alarm(s).

Do combination fire/burglar alarm systems meet Oregon hush feature requirements?



- Yes, if they can be silenced at a control unit (panel).

How do I tell if my smoke alarms meet the Oregon requirements?

- If you have an ionization alarm(s), it must have a hush feature, and if the ionization alarm(s) is solely battery operated it must have a ten-year battery.

What is the difference between smoke alarms and smoke detectors?

- **Smoke alarms** are defined as self-contained, single or multiple-station smoke-sensing devices. Smoke alarms may include two or more single station units wired to operate in conjunction with each other.
- **Smoke detectors** are defined as smoke-sensing devices that are not self-contained, that are intended for use in conjunction with a fire alarm system control panel.



What is the difference between an ionization alarm and photoelectric alarm?

- **Ionization smoke alarms** contain material that ionizes the air, making an electrical path. When products of combustion enter the device, the molecules attach themselves to the ions. The change in electric current flow triggers the alarm.
- **Photoelectric smoke alarms** contain a light source and photocell, which is activated by light. Light from the bulb reflects off the smoke particles and is directed towards the photocell. The photocell is then activated to trigger the alarm.

When properly installed and maintained both types of alarms alert you to a fire and



Where must alarms be installed in a single family home?

The minimum requirements are:

- Smoke alarms must be installed outside the sleeping area.

- If the home has more than one level a smoke alarm must be installed on each level.
- Install smoke alarms on the ceiling at least four inches from the nearest wall or high on a wall, four to 12 inches from the ceiling. The Office of State Fire Marshal recommends adding smoke alarms to each bedroom for additional protection.
- Single family dwellings are required to meet the applicable requirements of the State Building Code in force at the time of construction.



Do smoke alarms need to be installed in the bedrooms?

- Only if required by Building Codes at the time of construction, **BUT** the Office of State Fire Marshal encourages everyone to install smoke alarms in their bedrooms to help ensure ultimate protection.

Where must smoke alarms not be placed?

- Smoke alarms should not be installed in kitchens, bathrooms, garages or unheated areas because moisture,

frost, cooking vapors and exhaust fumes could cause the unit to sound a false alarm.

What should I look for when purchasing an ionization smoke alarm?

- Look for an alarm that has a hush feature, a low battery warning signal, a loud alarm and if it is solely battery operated, a ten-year battery. Only purchase an alarm that has been tested by the Underwriter's Laboratories (it will have a UL symbol) or other nationally recognized testing laboratories on it.

How do I maintain my smoke alarms?

- Smoke alarms have a limited life span. Alarms that are ten years old or older need to be replaced because the sensor wears out. (Look for the date stamp on the smoke alarm.) Test smoke alarms monthly and vacuum



Fire Safety Starts With You

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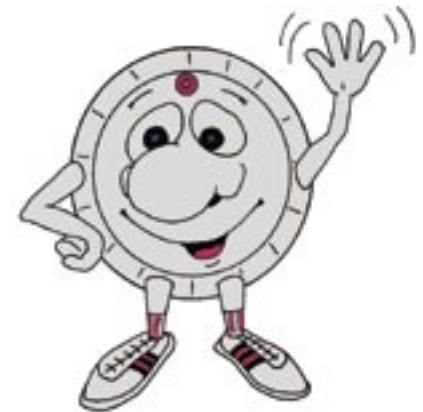
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Questions?
Contact your local fire department or
Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal
A division of Oregon State Police
(503) 373-1540, ext. 228
www.sfm.state.or.us

What You Need to Know About Smoke Alarms Before You Sell Your Home



Why Smoke Alarms?
Home fires are a life and death threat to everyone!

Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal