



TOWN OF CRESTON

CRESTON FIRE RESCUE

PO Box 1339, 200-10th Avenue North, Creston, BC V0B 1G0
Phone: 250-428-4321 Fax: 250-402-6595



Mandatory Smoke Alarms in BC

Every residential building built before 1979 must have a smoke alarm installed by May 1, 2010. The new law, under the BC Fire Code, increases public safety and awareness, helping reduce the health risks and property damage caused by fire in older residential buildings. There are about 800,000 residential buildings in BC constructed before 1979, some of them may require smoke alarms if not previously voluntarily installed.

The BC Fire Chiefs' Association applaud the government for the changes to the BC Fire Code announced on March 25th by the Ministry of Housing and Social Development. With this change, every private home and hotel & motel room built before 1979 shall have at minimum battery operated smoke alarms. Previously, only buildings built after 1979 were required to have smoke alarms.

"This is an issue that the Fire Chiefs' Association of BC began lobbying for last year", says FCABC President Stephen Gamble, "we are very happy to see that the government acted upon it so quickly in the interest of public safety." The Fire Chiefs' Association of British Columbia represents almost 350 fire chiefs and regional fire managers throughout the province.

The legislative change also includes all sleeping rooms, such as those found in hotels and recreational buildings that provide temporary sleeping accommodation. Owners of these older residential buildings can install battery-operated smoke alarms, rather than connecting smoke alarms to the buildings' electrical system. Battery-operated smoke alarms are an affordable way to improve safety.

Landlords must make sure their rental properties comply with the law. Tenants should contact their landlord immediately if they do not have the required smoke alarms, or the smoke alarm is not working. Within the Town of Creston, landlords must install 110V hard wired interconnected smoke alarms in all rental properties as per municipal bylaw. This municipal bylaw provision was created due to the lack of provincial legislative requirements for landlords to ensure their rental properties provided reasonable level of life safety.

Landlords and business operated sleeping accommodations (hostels, hotels, motels and bed & breakfasts) are required to maintain maintenance and inspection records for a minimum of two years. These records need to be made available to a fire inspector upon request since these are occupancies which require fire inspections.

"Any smoke alarm is better than none," states Fire Chief Bruce Mabin, "but it is recommended that home owners look at installing 110 volt hard wired smoke alarms. You don't have to worry about changing batteries. Better yet, if installed on the same electrical circuit, one alarm goes off in the detection of smoke, all the alarms will go off, providing better notification to occupants who may sleep with bedroom doors closed."



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The Province developed the new smoke alarm regulations with advice from the Office of the Fire Commissioner, fire service associations and the public. Changes will make the BC Fire Code more consistent with the National Fire Code.

Home owners and landlords may contact the municipal building inspector or fire department to ensure compliance with any localized smoke alarm bylaws, such as the requirement for 110V hard wired for rental properties within the Town of Creston. Both locations will have handout information regarding installation locations and other useful information regarding smoke alarms.

How to Stay Protected

- Install smoke alarms according to manufactures instructions
- Develop a fire escape plan and practice it with the entire household so when the smoke alarm sounds everyone knows how to escape safely.
- Test your smoke alarms once per month and change batteries every year.
- Never remove the batteries from smoke alarms.
- If nuisance alarms are a problem, try moving the alarm to another location or purchase an alarm with a "hush feature" that temporarily silences the alarm.
- Smoke alarms don't last forever. Replace them if they are more than 10 years old. Many manufactures place a "replace date" or recommended replacement date for smoke alarms, which ranges from six to ten years.

If you are interested in learning more about the smoke alarm requirements and recommended locations for installation, please visit the Town of Creston's website at www.creston.ca. You will find the information under the Fire Department's Public Education section (http://www.creston.ca/?page_id=192).