



City of Madison Fire Department

News Release

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1st Part of New Smoke Alarm Ordinance Takes Effect This Week

As leases turn over this weekend, renters will find more information about fire safety as part of the move-in process.

The first half of the City of Madison's new smoke alarm will take effect Saturday, August 15. The new ordinance passed by the City Council in March requires smoke alarms with 10-year lithium batteries designed to last the life of the smoke alarm.

Under the newly adopted ordinance, all smoke alarms must have a 10-year battery in a tamper-resistant alarm unit. 9-volt batteries will no longer be used UNLESS they are being used as a battery back-up to a hard-wired alarm.

The ordinance also requires additional alarms in the residence:

- o In each bedroom
- o In each sleeping area
- o Within six feet of each door leading to a bedroom or sleeping area of each unit
- o On each floor of the building

But the ordinance also includes targeted educational efforts and spells out the responsibilities for tenants and landlords, including maintenance of the alarms, fire safety information, and fines for tenants if alarms show signs of tampering.

Fines of \$172 may be assessed for a first offense.

1) The owner of any residential building shall:

- a) Replace the battery for a secondary power supply in all smoke alarms each time the lease is renewed or once each year, whichever time period is shorter, or as recommended by the manufacturer.
- b) Replace the batteries in any smoke alarm whenever the battery is insufficient or unable to power the smoke alarm.
- c) Replace non-operational, damaged, or missing smoke alarms with smoke alarms meeting the requirements of MGO 34.42 (2)(a).
- d) Provide all tenants with the manufacturer's maintenance and testing instructions.
- e) Upon each new lease and at least once every 12 months for every continuing tenant, provide tenants with fire safety educational materials as prescribed by the Fire Chief. Materials are available at www.madisonfire.org.
- f) Upon each new lease and once every 12 months for every continuing tenant, complete and sign this document as prescribed in MGO 32.06(4).

2) The tenant shall be responsible for:

- a) Maintaining and testing, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, smoke alarms that are within the dwelling unit during the term of the tenancy.
 - b) Notifying the owner in writing if a smoke alarm becomes inoperable. The owner shall have five days from receipt of such written notice to repair and replace the inoperable alarm(s). Any smoke alarms which are powered with standard batteries which are found to be inoperable shall be replaced by the owner with smoke alarms meeting the requirements of MGO 34.42 (2)(a).
 - c) Completing and signing this document as prescribed in MGO 32.06(4).
- 3) No person, including tenants or occupants, shall tamper with, remove, alter, damage or otherwise render any smoke alarm inoperable (MGO 34.26).
 - 4) Where smoke alarms powered solely by commercial light and power have been installed and maintained in accordance with this chapter, such smoke alarms shall continue to be used and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
 - 5) No smoke alarm may remain in service for more than ten years unless the manufacturer specifies a different service life.

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