

10-year sealed battery smoke alarms be installed in homes built before January 1, 1977.

TRENTON, NJ – The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) Division of Fire Safety is informing residents of a new smoke alarm regulation, effective January 1, 2019, which requires 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms be installed in homes built before January 1, 1977. The requirement includes one- and two-family dwellings, motel rooms, and housing units in rooming houses. The State's Uniform Construction Code requires all homes built after January 1, 1977 to have alternating current (AC) hardwired alarms installed inside the dwellings, and those homes are not affected by the new regulation.

"The importance of working smoke alarms cannot be overstated," said Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver, who also serves as DCA Commissioner. "They are essential for quickly detecting a fire and providing an early warning to occupants to allow them to safely escape. The key to early detection is having functioning smoke alarms and the 10-year sealed batteries will help keep them reliably working longer to prevent injury and save more lives."

The most common cause of a smoke alarm not functioning is the lack of a working battery. Often, the battery is removed so it can be used somewhere else or the battery no longer has the necessary charge. Batteries are also removed to prevent nuisance alarms from cooking. For this reason, DCA's Division of Fire Safety proposed and adopted regulations that require the use of 10-year sealed battery type smoke alarms. This technology precludes an individual from removing the battery, thus maintaining a working alarm. Also, the 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms are designed to last 10 years and be replaced. Utilizing this new technology to ensure a working smoke alarm will go a long way to reducing fire injuries and deaths.

One- and two- family dwellings will need to comply with these new requirements prior to sale or change of occupancy. Local fire inspectors will check for these new alarms during routine annual inspections in motels and rooming houses. Regardless of the age or condition of smoke alarms currently installed, all affected alarms must be replaced with 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms. Violation notices will be issued to property owners where the 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms are not installed. Local fire officials and property owners are encouraged to work together to establish a reasonable timetable for compliance.

This new requirement does not apply to low voltage alarm systems, alternating current (AC) hardwired alarms and Carbon Monoxide alarms. Combination Carbon Monoxide alarm and smoke alarm single station devices are required to be of the 10-year sealed battery type.