

Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Detectors



Berkshire County Board of REALTORS, Inc.

Released 2010

The Board of Fire Prevention Regulations has approved an emergency amendment to 527 CMR 32 Approved Smoke Detectors. This regulation applies to units undergoing sale or transfer of buildings containing up to five residential units. The regulation goes into effect on April 5, 2010. At that time the regulation will still require photoelectric smoke detectors within 20 feet of a kitchen or full bath containing a shower. Areas located beyond 20 feet will be required to contain dual detection by either a single unit or two separate units. In addition to the date change the regulation has been clarified to indicate it applies to residential units constructed prior to January, 1975 that have not undergone major alteration covered by the State Building Code. It also contains a provision for low voltage household warning systems that may have been installed in these homes.

Smoke Detectors:

All one and two family structures used in whole or in part for residential purposes must be equipped with approved smoke detectors. Owner of building shall install approved monitored battery powered or primary power (hard-wired) smoke detector(s) on each level of habitation and on the basement level, in the following manner;

- on the ceiling of each stairway leading to the floor above, near the base of, but not within each stairway
- outside each separate sleeping area.

All structures of not less than three, nor more than five units used in whole or in part for residential purposes must be equipped with approved Smoke Detectors.

- monitored battery powered smoke detector(s) on the ceiling of each stairway leading to the floor above and outside each separate sleeping area or
- primary power smoke detector (hard-wired) on the ceiling of each stairway leading to the floor above and outside each separate sleeping area AND
- In all common hallways and basements of said residential buildings or structures, a series of interconnected approved primary power smoke detectors shall be installed.

Provided, however, that the head of the fire department shall allow the installation of such battery powered smoke detectors on the interior of the units.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors:

Every dwelling, building or structure, occupied in whole or in part for residential purposes with fossil-fuel burning equipment (like a furnace, boiler, water heater, fireplace or any other apparatus, appliance or device) or enclosed parking areas, regulations require carbon monoxide detectors on every level of the home and within ten feet of each sleeping area and in habitable portions of basements and attics. The CO detectors may be:

- Battery operated with battery monitoring; or
- Plug-ins with battery back-up; or
- Hard-wired with battery backup; or
- Low voltage system; or
- Wireless, or
- Qualified combination (smoke/carbon monoxide alarm)

Acceptable combination smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms must have simulated voice and tone alarms that clearly distinguish between the two types of emergencies. The State Building Code mandates that only photoelectric combination alarms are permitted within twenty feet of a bathroom or kitchen.

A fee of \$25 - \$50 may be charged by the fire department for both smoke and carbon detector certificates. If appropriate carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are not both installed and working at the time of the inspection, the fire department will have to make a return visit to check for compliance and may charge an additional fee.

This Fact Sheet is for informational use only. We suggest you contact the local fire department to determine what is approved in the community that you are selling your property.



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