



Fire and Smoke Alarms in Scottish Homes

In February 2019, the legislation relating to smoke detection in the home changed. This means all domestic properties in Scotland, regardless of tenure, should have the same levels of detection; increasing fire safety.

Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London, a Ministerial Working Group on Building and Fire Safety was established to review Scotland's building and fire safety regulatory frameworks. As part of this work, the group agreed that a consultation on fire and smoke alarms, originally planned for later this year, should be prioritised.

How many alarms are required to meet the standards?

The standard requires:

- One smoke alarm installed in the room most frequently used for general daytime living purposes
- One smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallways and landings
- One heat alarm installed in every kitchen

All alarms should be ceiling mounted and interlinked. There is also a requirement for carbon monoxide detectors to be fitted where there is a carbon-fuelled appliance (such as boilers, fires (including open fires), heaters and stoves) or a flue.

I already have smoke alarms fitted in my home but they are not interlinked – do I need to change these to interlinked ones?

Yes – the requirement is to have all alarms interlinked. You may not hear the alarm closest to the fire but, by having an interlinked system, you will be alerted immediately.

There are lots of different types of alarms available – which ones should I get?

Alarms can be interlinked via wires (hardwired) or wirelessly (by radio communication). Where adding to an existing hardwired system, care should be taken to ensure that all alarms are interlinked, with all alarms sounding when any one device is activated.

You can install tamper proof long-life lithium battery alarms or mains-wired alarms. Mains-wired alarms are generally cheaper than the tamper proof long-life battery alarms; however, installation will need to be carried out by an electrician which will be an additional cost to consider. Further detailed information on the requirements of the standard, including types of alarms, is set out in the Tolerable Standard Guidance Chapters 16 and 17 www.gov.scot/publications/fire-and-smoke-alarms-tolerable-standard-guidance/.

Your local DIY provider should also be able to provide some advice and guidance.

How long do I have to comply?

The regulations come into force in February 2021, meaning homeowners and landlords have until then to comply. **However, installing alarms at the earliest opportunity, will provide improved fire safety in your home.**

Who will pay for these smoke alarms?

Any costs will be the responsibility of home owners. If you do not own the property, then your landlord will be responsible for installing and paying for the alarms.

I am a tenant in a privately rented property – how do I make sure my landlord complies?

As the new standards for fire and smoke alarms extend those which currently apply in the Private Rented Sector PRS to housing of all tenures, your landlord should already be complying. The standard is enforced by the right of tenants to apply to the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber), so if you believe that your landlord is failing to comply, you can apply to the First-tier Tribunal. Penalties for non-compliance would be determined by the Tribunal.

www.housingandpropertychamber.scot/

I am a tenant of a local authority or housing association – how do I make sure my landlord complies?

The responsibility for meeting the standard applies to building and home owners, so your landlord will be responsible for making sure that your home complies with the standard, and the cost of meeting it.

The new standard comes into force in February 2021 so your housing association should be making arrangements to ensure your home complies by this date. The standards will be monitored by the Scottish Housing Regulator, who may intervene as they deem appropriate for any non-compliance.

I have shared ownership of my home with a housing association. I have been told that I am responsible for making sure that my house complies with the standard, is this correct?

For shared ownership properties, as with other condition standards, responsibilities are set out in the occupancy agreement. However, in general, it is your responsibility as the proportion owner, rather than the Registered Social Landlord, to meet the new fire and smoke alarm standard.

Further information on the requirements of the new standard, and how to meet it, is available from the Scottish Government www.gov.scot/publications/fire-and-smoke-alarms-in-scottish-homes/.