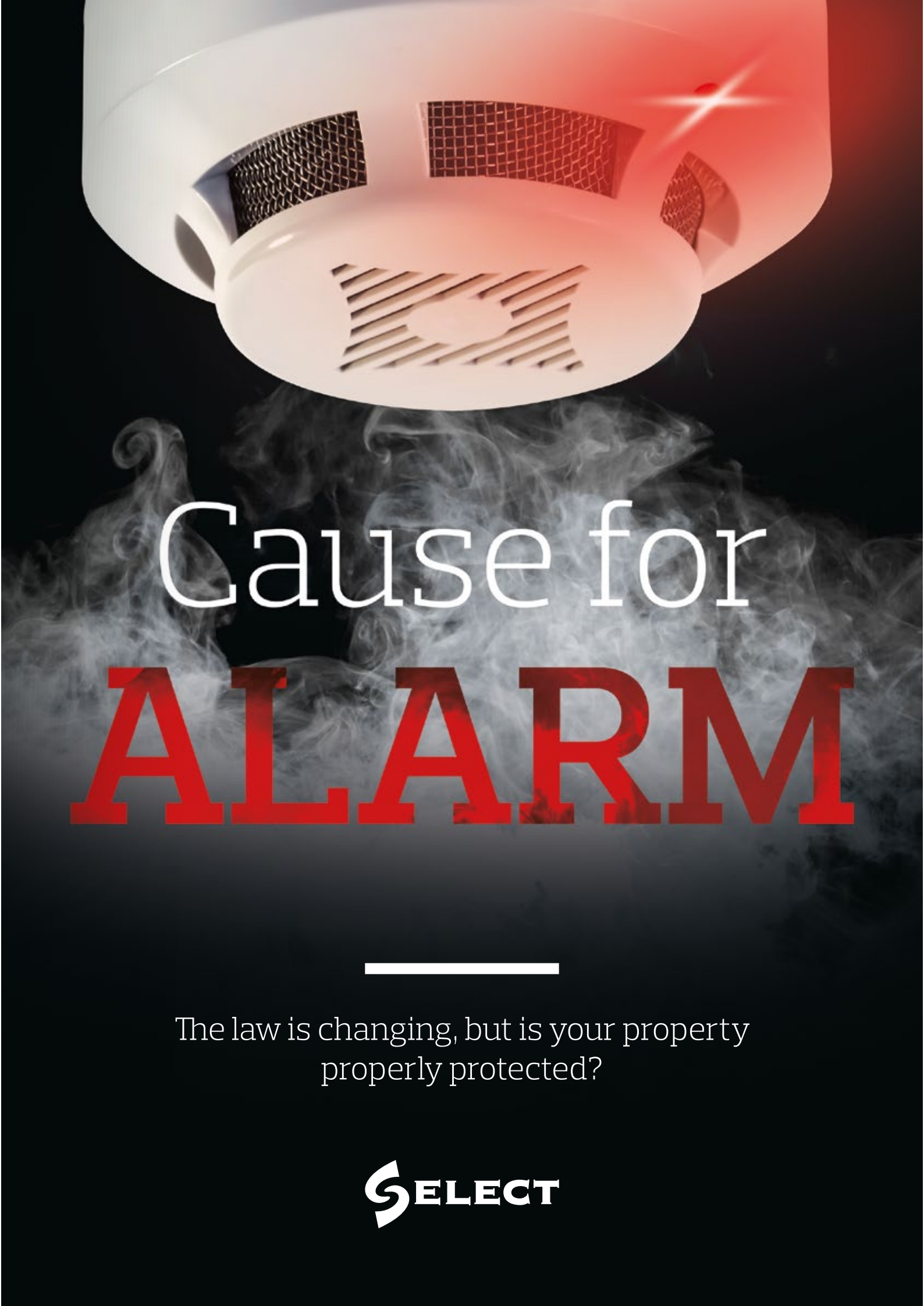

The law is changing, but is your property properly protected?

SELECT

What's changing?

New regulations are being introduced to ensure that every home in Scotland has an effective system in place for detecting and warning of smoke, fire and carbon monoxide (CO).

This means every property must have interconnected smoke and heat alarms fitted throughout.

In addition, a CO alarm is also required in the relevant room in every home.

Where do I need alarms?

Under the new regulations, at least one smoke or heat alarm should be fitted in your:

- living room
- hallway
- landing
- kitchen
- loft conversion.

Any rooms you pass through to reach the hallway from the kitchen or living room must also have an alarm fitted, unless the living room or kitchen has its own escape route. You'll find more detailed advice on where to fit these alarms on **pages 4&5**.

CO alarms should be fitted anywhere there is a fuel-burning appliance or a flue. Read more on **page 6**.

When do I need to be ready?

All homes in Scotland must meet the new regulations by **1 February 2022**. If you're not up to standard, your local authority could use its statutory powers to make you carry out any work required.

What properties are affected?

The new regulations apply to **ALL** homes, homeowners and landlords in Scotland:

SOCIAL HOUSING

PRIVATE RENTALS

DOMESTIC DWELLINGS

What type of alarms do I need?

You should always ensure that your **smoke and heat alarms** are one of the following:

- Mains-powered with battery back-up, interlinked with wiring or wirelessly.
- Tamper-proof, sealed, long-life lithium battery, interlinked or wireless.

You can use a mix of both types, as long as they are all interlinked, so if one device detects a fire, all the alarms will trigger.

When choosing a **CO detector**, always check that it complies with BS EN 50291, and that it's powered by a long-life battery. Also remember to check that it has a warning device that will alert you when it's about to expire.

A mains-powered detector can also be used, providing it complies with BS EN 50291 (Type A).

Whatever you choose, your CO detector should be regularly maintained and tested.

What about my existing system?

If you're adding new alarms to an existing fire detection system, you'll need to ensure that all devices are interlinked, so every alarm sounds when one device is activated.

Where should I install smoke and heat alarms?

Heavy traffic

A smoke alarm **MUST** be fitted in the most frequently used room, e.g. the living room or lounge.

Keep moving

A smoke alarm **MUST** also be installed in every circulation space on each storey of the home, e.g. the hallway or landing.

Sweet dreams

We recommend that there should be an alarm within 3m of every bedroom door, so it can be heard clearly by whoever's inside.

Recipe for success

You **MUST** install a heat alarm in every kitchen.

High and dry

Alarms should **NOT** be fitted in bathrooms or outside bathroom doors, as they can be affected by steam and moisture.

Breathing space

Make sure you position alarms 300mm away from walls, light fittings or other obstructions.

Full beam

If your room has a beam, it can affect where the alarm must be fitted. Contact SELECT or Aico for exact details – see **page 7** for how to get in touch.

Stay connected

All smoke and heat alarms should be interconnected, i.e. linked. That way, if one alarm detects a fire, all alarms will trigger.

Peak performance

On peaked and sloped ceilings, smoke alarms should be fitted 600mm vertically down from the apex. Heat alarms should be positioned 150mm vertically down from the apex.

Keep in step

On stairways, put the alarm at the top and bottom of the stairs – not on the sloped ceiling directly above it.

Over your head

All smoke and heat alarms should be ceiling mounted.

Images courtesy of Aico

What is carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a toxic gas that has no colour, taste or smell. Exposure to low levels can cause headaches and nausea. High levels can cause death within minutes.

CO can be produced by any fuel-burning appliance such as a boiler, gas fire, gas cooker or wood-burning stove.

Because it's impossible for humans to tell if CO is present, the only way to protect against it is to install a suitable CO detector. The new regulations apply to such alarms.

Where do I need a CO alarm?

CO detectors should be fitted in all rooms where there is a fixed fuel-burning appliance or a flue. Depending on where you're installing it, there are different requirements.

Rooms with an appliance

- Fit alarms on the ceiling, 1m-3m from potential CO sources, and at least 300mm from any obstructions.
- In a confined space, e.g. a boiler room, fit the alarm on the ceiling just outside.

Rooms without an appliance

- Alarms should always be fitted at breathing height.
- If installed in a bedroom, this could be the height of the bedhead.

What is the Tolerable Standard?

When reading about the new regulations, you may have heard that all homes in Scotland are required to meet the 'Tolerable Standard'.

This is the minimum requirement that must be met by all properties when it comes to fitting 'satisfactory equipment', i.e. the smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms mentioned as part of the measures throughout this guide.

If you don't carry out these measures, your property will not meet the Tolerable Standard, and will therefore be treated as not being in a reasonable state of repair.

As mentioned previously on **page 2**, local authorities can therefore take action to make you carry out work and bring your property up to the required level.

What is the Repairing Standard?

You may also have heard about the 'Repairing Standard', which applies solely to private landlords in Scotland.

This refers to the minimum requirement that must be met by a rented property at the start of any tenancy, and which **MUST** continue throughout the subsequent occupancy.

As a landlord, it means that you must fit the equipment as outlined in this guide, and you must also ensure that these devices are either mains-powered alarms **OR** tamper-proof long-life lithium battery alarms.

In the case of a house of multiple occupation (HMO), a more stringent standard is required under the terms of your licence.

More details about this and the Repairing Standard are available at the Scottish Government website, listed below.

Where can I find out more?

SELECT is working in partnership with Aico to provide information on the new regulations. We are both happy to discuss any questions you may have about preparing your property.

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Further information can also be found on the Scottish Government website:
www.gov.scot/publications/fire-and-smoke-alarms-tolerable-standard-guidance

SELECT

Founded in 1900, SELECT is Scotland's largest trade association.

It has nearly 1,250 member businesses who collectively have an annual turnover of around £1 billion and employ over 15,000 people and 3,500 apprentices.

SELECT also delivers training courses to more than 3,500 electricians each year and is committed to regulation of the industry for a safer Scotland.

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