



Yakima County Fire Marshal's Office

Public Information Handout FP-11

Smoke Alarm/Smoke Detector Requirements in Existing Homes, Apartments, & Condominiums



International Fire Code Chapter 11

The International Fire Code (IFC) requires that single station smoke detectors be installed in all existing homes, apartments and condominiums.

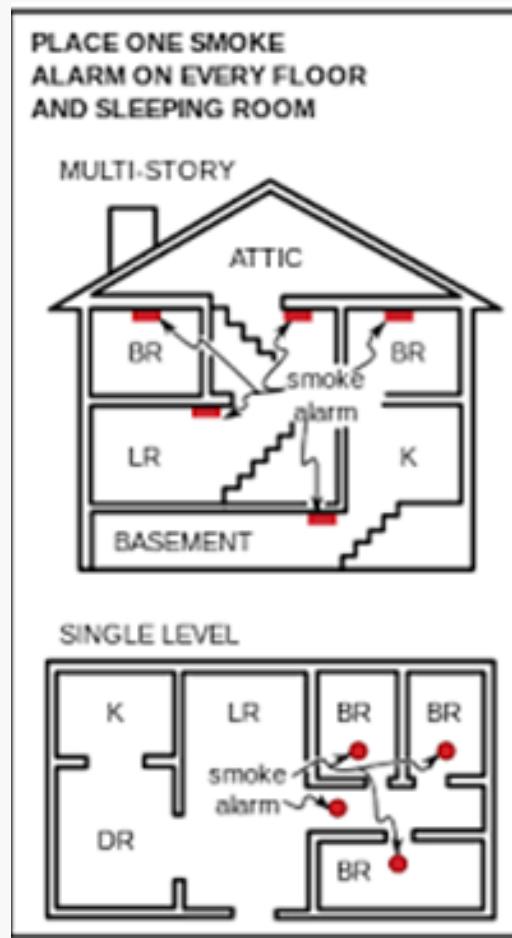
Single-station Smoke Alarms

What is a “single-station smoke alarm”?

The IFC defines it as “An assembly incorporating the detector, the control equipment, and the alarm-sounding device in one unit, operated from a power supply either in the unit or obtained at the point of installation. Commonly called a smoke detector.

Single-station smoke alarms must be installed:

1. On the ceiling or wall outside of each sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms.
2. In each room used for sleeping purposes.
3. In each story within a dwelling unit including basements but not including crawl spaces.



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Interconnection

Where more than one smoke alarm is installed within an individual unit, the smoke alarms shall be interconnected in such a manner that the activation of one alarm will activate all of the other alarms in the individual unit. The alarm shall be clearly audible in all bedrooms over the background noise levels with all intervening doors closed.



Exceptions:

1. Interconnection is not required in buildings that are not undergoing alterations, repairs, or construction of any kind.
2. Smoke alarms in existing areas are not required to be interconnected where alterations or repairs do not result in the removal of interior walls or ceiling finishes exposing the structure, unless there is an attic, crawl space, or basement available which could provide access for interconnection without removal of interior finishes.

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Power Source

Single-station smoke alarms shall receive their primary power from the building wiring, provided that such wiring is served from a commercial source, and shall be equipped with a battery backup. Smoke alarms shall emit a signal when the batteries are low. Wiring shall be permanent and without a disconnecting switch other than as required for overcurrent protection.

Exception: Smoke alarms are permitted to be solely battery-operated:

1. In existing buildings where no construction is taking place.
2. In buildings not served by a commercial power source.
3. In existing buildings undergoing alterations or repairs that do not result in the removal of interior walls or ceiling finishes exposing the structure, unless there is an attic, crawl space, or basement available which could provide access for the building wiring without the removal of interior finishes.

Rental Unit?

If you live in a rental unit (home, apartment or condominium) the owner is required by state law (RCW 43.44.110) to provide smoke alarms as outlined above. The tenant is responsible for the maintenance of the smoke alarm(s).

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact Yakima County Building and Fire Safety at (509) 574-2300.