

NEW RESIDENTIAL SMOKE DETECTOR INSTALLATION REQUIREMENTS FAQ

Effective April 1, 2009 (effective date delayed from October 1, 2008.) the Iowa State Fire Marshal will require all new residential construction to be equipped with dual sensor smoke detectors.

Q) Where can I obtain a copy of Iowa's smoke detector requirements?

A) Code law granting authority to the State Fire Marshal to establish rules on smoke detectors are located under Chapter 100.18 of the Iowa Code and can be viewed at: <http://coolice.legis.state.ia.us/Cool-ICE/default.asp?category=billinfo&service=iowaCode&ga=82> When this address pops up, insert 100.18 in the box and click submit.

The new Administrative Rules regarding dual sensor detectors are located under 661-210 of the Iowa Administrative Code and can be viewed at: http://search.legis.state.ia.us/NXT/gateway.dll/IowaState/iac_6/a661/iac_a661_c210v3.pdf

Q) What is a dual sensor detector?

A) A dual sensor detector is a detector that has both a photoelectric sensor that protects best against slow, smoldering fires and an ionization sensor that protects best against fast, flaming fires.

Q) So how are these detectors different from what I have in my home now?

A) Most detectors in homes currently use 'ionization' technology to detect the smoke. Ionization detectors are best at the early detection of rapidly spreading, flaming fires. Some homes may have detectors that use 'photoelectric' technology to detect the smoke. Photoelectric detectors are best at the early detection of slow burning, smoldering fires. Dual sensor smoke detectors combine both technologies into one detector.

Q) What if my detectors don't need to be replaced right now?

A) If the ionization or photoelectric smoke detectors in your home currently meet all the manufacturer's recommendations, you are not required to immediately replace them with dual sensor detectors. However, when you have a detector that needs to be replaced, it must be replaced with a dual sensor detector.

Q) For purposes of this new rule, what is a "residential property"?

A) Residential properties include the following:

- Homes
- Dormitories - A residential building or portion of a building at an educational institution which houses students in rooms not individually equipped with cooking facilities.
- Multi-unit Residential Buildings - A residential building, an apartment house, or a

portion of a building or an apartment house with two or more units, hotel, motel, dormitory, or a rooming house.

Q) Will I notice anything different with the dual sensor detectors?

A) Not really. The appearance, mounting instructions, maintenance, and testing procedures mimic the detectors you currently have in your home. It is important that you read and follow the manufacturer's recommendations that come with the dual sensor detector.

Q) What is AC Power?

A) AC stands for Alternating Current and is the power provided in your homes that is used to operate your utilities to include such things as your electric stove, TV, refrigerator, air conditioner, and your lights.

Q) What is DC Power?

A) DC stands for Direct Current; power that most commonly comes from a battery, such as your car, or your portable electronic equipment.

Q) What does "powered by both AC and DC" mean?

A) This means that the device is powered by both your house current and a back-up battery (most cases a 9 volt battery).

Q) What does "Interconnect" mean?

A) It means that the detectors are either electronically or hard wired together so if one detector sounds, all detectors interconnected together will sound.

Q) What does the code mean when it says detectors "Other than dual sensor detectors may be installed"? And when can they be installed?

A) If the conditions of the smoke detector requirements are met with dual sensor detectors, additional detectors may be added, such as a combination smoke/CO detector, or a smoke detector that has a strobe light for the hearing impaired. But remember, dual sensor detectors first!

Please do your part to help reduce the number of fire injuries and death. Properly installed and maintained smoke alarms are the key to ensuring early notification in the event of a fire. This is critical to improving the chance of surviving in a fire!