



Announcement of new smoke alarm legislation

Photoelectric Smoke Alarms to be brought in by 1 November

The NT Government has announced changes to the Fire and Emergency Regulations to mandate the installation of photoelectric smoke alarms in all NT residences as of 1 November 2011.

The Acting Director of the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service (NTFRS), Mick Ayre said today that the introduction of smoke alarms in every residence is a very positive move.

"The photoelectric type of alarm is strongly favoured by fire services everywhere, as they are able to detect smouldering fires that are not as quickly picked up by the ionization type of alarms.

"The new regulations will require all owners of residential property across the Territory to install photoelectric smoke alarms. When establishing a new lease on rental property, a landlord must ensure that a smoke alarm is installed; however the responsibility for maintaining the alarm in working order will be that of the tenant.

"The price of photo-electric alarms is now comparable with the more common ionisation alarms.

From 1 November, all residential dwellings and movable dwellings including caravans, and temporary accommodation including safari-style tents are required to have a working photoelectric smoke alarm.

Following 1 November, if you already have a smoke alarm installed in your home and it is an ionisation smoke alarm, you do not have to change to a photoelectric smoke alarm until one of the following occurs:

- Your smoke alarm ceases to work, in which case you will need to replace it with a photoelectric type smoke alarm; or
- You sell your home; or
- You rent out your premises or renew a tenancy; or
- You hire out your caravan.

"The new regulations are a major step forward in protecting vulnerable people and we will be posting information about smoke alarms and what the new regulations require, on our website – www.fire.nt.gov.au

"There will also be a significant communications and education strategy to promote the use of photoelectric alarms, to help save lives. The aim of the education campaign is to inform and educate the community about the potential life saving benefits of these devices. The community will be given sufficient time to purchase and install the required smoke alarms."

"People's sense of smell is drastically impaired while they sleep and smouldering fires may burn for some time with poisonous gases emitted that can kill a person before they are even aware of the danger.

"Too many people have lost their lives in house fires and in many cases, these homes had no smoke alarms. This to me is quite appalling as a simple smoke alarm can prevent injury and death when maintained and used properly," said Acting Director Mick Ayre.

The number of Territory buildings with smoke alarms has increased 35 to 73 per cent over the past five years and this new regulation will assist in ensuring the most vulnerable are protected as well.