

# OFFICE of the STATE FIRE MARSHAL

## NR 12/22/17 Statewide Smoke Alarm Law Reminder



### New Smoke Alarm Law Reminder

A new state law aimed at reducing home fire deaths went into effect on July 1, 2013. It requires replacement of any battery-only operated smoke alarm that is more than 10 years old with a unit powered by a 10-year sealed-in battery having a “Hush” button feature – ultimately affecting more than 800,000 Maryland homes with battery-only operated smoke alarms. The effective date for this requirement to be completed by is January 1, 2018.

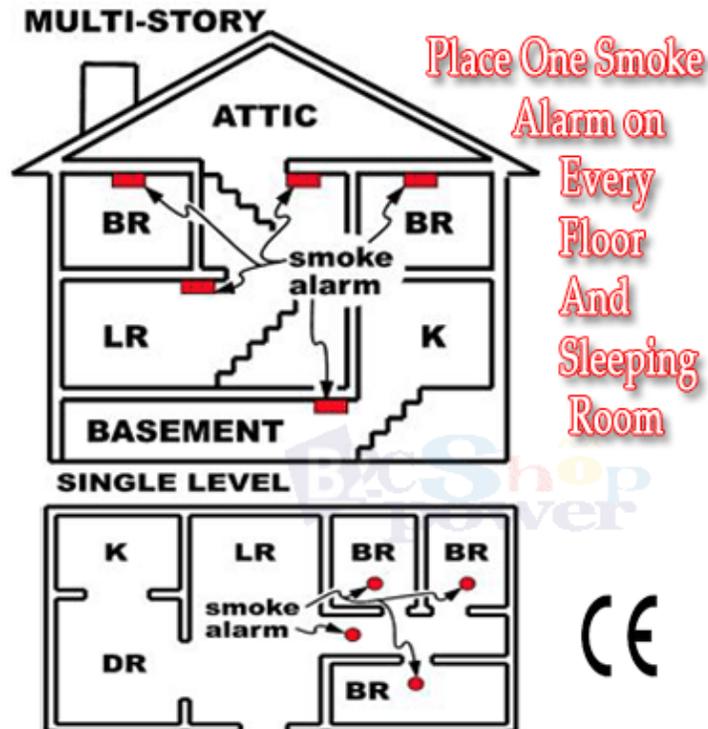
Why is a sealed-in battery important? Nationally, two-thirds of all home fire deaths occur in homes with either no smoke alarm or no working smoke alarm, mainly due to missing or disconnected batteries. By sealing the battery inside the alarm, the unit becomes tamper resistant and removes the burden from consumers to remember to change batteries, which in turn, will save lives. These sealed-in, long-life battery smoke alarms provide continuous protection for a decade, and national fire experts with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM) recommend their use.

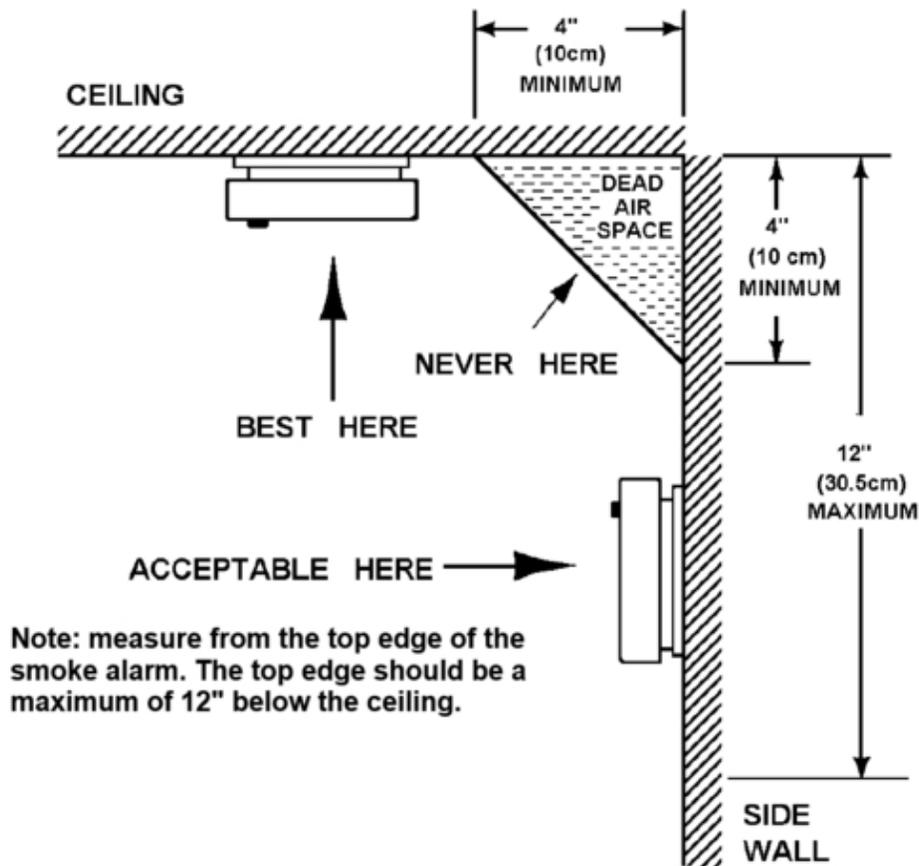
The new Maryland Smoke Alarm Law, Public Safety Article Sections 9-101 through 9-109 requires the replacement of smoke alarms when they are ten years old; (ten years from the date of manufacture). This replacement requirement is already in the adopted State Fire Code, reference to the 2013 edition of NFPA 72, Paragraph 14.4.7. It is envisioned that adding the wording in State Law and publicizing the requirement will hopefully result in the widespread replacement of older nonfunctioning or unreliable smoke alarms. The date of manufacture, while sometimes hard to locate, should be printed on the back of the smoke alarm. If no manufacture date can be located, it is clearly time to replace the smoke alarm.

The new law heavily emphasizes the use of sealed-battery smoke alarms with a long life battery and a silence/hush button feature. However, it is critical to understand these devices are appropriate only where battery-only operated smoke alarms presently exist or in locations where no smoke alarms are present. (It is never acceptable to remove required wired in smoke alarms and replace them with any type of battery-only operated device). A 110 volt electrically powered smoke alarm may only be replaced with a new 10 volt unit with a battery backup.

Smoke alarms need to be placed on every level of the home and outside the sleeping areas, such as, the hallway accessing the bedrooms. It is also recommended to place them inside each bedroom to allow sound sleepers to be alerted if smoke begins to enter the room. Please remember to keep bedroom doors closed when sleeping to help ensure smoke, toxic gases and flames can't easily enter the bedroom allowing you more time to escape.

State Fire Marshal Brian S. Geraci emphasizes the value of smoke alarms, "The importance of ensuring the proper maintenance and use of smoke alarms is paramount. The materials used in products we keep in our homes tend to burn much more readily, thus giving us a very limited window of time to escape the effects of fire. These early warning devices can be the difference between life or death in an incident of an uncontrolled fire inside our homes".





The Office of the State Fire Marshal is an agency of the Department of State Police dedicated to helping protect citizens from fire and explosion through a comprehensive program of education, inspection, investigation and fire protection engineering. For more information on fire safety call 1-800-525-3124, log onto our website at: [Maryland State Fire Marshal](#) and/or our [Facebook Page](#).

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