



The Office of Fire Safety and Injury Prevention Education

8501 Veterans Highway Millersville, MD 21108 410-222-8303

www.aacounty.org/fire

Smoke Alarm Outreach Program

- **January 1, 2018**, is the effective date of a state law aimed at reducing home fire deaths. The law, which went into effect on July 1, 2013, 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. This affects more than 800,000 Maryland homes with battery-only operated smoke alarms.
- Updates to Maryland's Smoke Alarm Law are part of a nationwide trend to ensure new and replacement smoke alarms have the most effective technology available.

How are they powered ?

There are three ways that a smoke alarm may be powered:

- **Battery** The easiest to install because they do not require any connection to the homes electrical system. The challenge with these alarms is they require the battery to be replaced periodically for the unit to work.
- **A/C Hard Wired without battery backup** These alarms are wired directly into the homes electrical system. These alarms do not operate if there is a power outage.
- **A/C Hard wired with battery backup** This is the best way an alarm can be powered. If the battery dies, it will still be powered by the homes electrical system. If there is a power failure, the battery will operate the alarm.

You should have a smoke alarm on every floor, outside sleeping areas and inside every bedroom. Remember to practice your Fire Escape Plan!

The Maryland law requires:

Replace battery-only operated smoke alarms with units powered by sealed in, ten-year/long-life batteries with a "silence/hush" feature.

Upgrade smoke alarm placement in existing residential occupancies to comply with minimum specified standards. These standards vary according to when the building was constructed.

Replacement of all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old. This applies to both hard-wired and battery-operated smoke alarms.

The new law heavily emphasizes the use of sealed smoke alarms with long-life batteries and silence/hush buttons. However, it is critical to understand that these devices are appropriate only where battery-operated smoke alarms presently exist as permitted by Code or in locations where no smoke alarms are present. **It is never acceptable to remove required hard-wired smoke alarms and replace them with any battery-only operated device.**

Smoke alarms are free for seniors and those on a limited income.

Call 410-222-8303

If you are unsure how to install an already purchased alarm, a qualified fire department personnel can assist you.