

# SMOKE ALARM MAINTENANCE AND REPLACEMENT

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For more information, relating to the maintenance responsibilities in rental properties, refer to the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services [Smoke Alarms in Queensland brochure](#).

## MAINTENANCE

### How do I keep my smoke alarms working?

Smoke alarms can only save lives if they are well maintained and work properly.

Steps to remember:

- Read the manufacturer instructions.
- Once a month check the operation of the smoke alarm by pressing the test button. If you cannot reach the button easily, use a broom handle.
- Keep them clean. Dust and debris can interfere with their operation, so vacuum over and around your smoke alarm regularly.
- Replace removable batteries, if applicable, annually.
- In most models when batteries are low the detector will sound a short 'BEEP' every minute or so. This is your reminder to replace the battery.
- Smoke alarms must never be painted.
- Failure to maintain your smoke alarm may lead to continued unwanted activations.
- If cooking smoke sets off the alarm, do not disable it. Turn on the range fan, open a window or wave a towel near the alarm until the alarm stops beeping. Or use the hush button (if fitted).
- If unwanted alarm activations persist when cooking, consider relocating the smoke alarm or change the range fan to exhaust externally.

## REPLACEMENT

### Why do I need to replace my smoke alarm?

- After 10 years smoke alarms may malfunction and their efficiency compromised with accumulated dust, insects, airborne contaminants and corrosion of the electrical circuitry.
- They must be replaced if they are more than 10 years old or if they fail to operate when tested.
- A smoke alarm constantly monitors the air 24 hours a day. At the end of 10 years, it has gone through millions of monitoring cycles. After so much use, components may become less reliable. This means that as the smoke alarm gets older, the potential of failure increases.
- Most smoke alarms have an expiry or replace by date stamped/printed on them.
- Contact the smoke alarm supplier or manufacturer for more detailed advice.

### How do I dispose of a smoke alarm I've replaced?

- If the smoke alarms are the photoelectric type, individual or small numbers can be disposed of with the household waste.
- If the smoke alarms are the ionisation type, indicated by the radiation warning symbol on the body of the alarm, individual or small numbers can be disposed of with the household waste.
- If disposing of a large number of smoke alarms QFES recommends consulting with the relevant authority or your local council for more information.