

COUNTY OF PLACER Community Development Resource Agency

BUILDING

Administrative Policy Smoke Detector Upgrades in Existing Dwelling or Sleeping Units

To: Building Division Staff

From: Max Shoffner, Building Inspector II

Approved: Tim Wegner, Chief Building Official

Effective Date: March 11, 2011

ISSUE:

It is necessary to define and communicate the code requirements consistently to the public in the field and in the office.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

In the previous 2001 CBC code edition there was an exception for requiring smoke detector upgrades. The exception states: "Repairs to the exterior surfaces of a Group R Occupancy are exempt from the requirements of this section". Further Placer County allowed HVAC change-outs, electrical panel change-outs, water heater change-outs to fall under the aforementioned exception even though the cost of the work exceeded \$1,000.00. The exception does not exist in the new 2010 California Residential code or the 2010 California Building code.

ANALYSIS:

In an effort to be consistent with nearby jurisdictions and the newly adopted 2010 California Residential and California Building Codes a new policy is required for "Smoke Detector upgrades in Existing Dwelling or Sleeping Units".

POLICY:

<u>All permits</u> issued and associated with a Residential Group R *Dwelling Unit or Sleeping Unit* shall conform to the following 2010 California Residential Code requirements for Smoke Alarms (Section R314).

R314.3.1 Alterations, repairs and additions: When *alterations*, repairs or *additions* requiring a *permit* occur, or when one or more sleeping rooms are added or created in existing *dwellings*, the individual *dwelling unit* shall be equipped with smoke alarms located as required for new *dwellings*.

R314.4 Power source: Smoke alarms shall receive their primary power from the building wiring provided that such wiring is served from a commercial source and shall be equipped with a battery backup. Smoke alarms with integral strobes that are not equipped with battery backup shall be connected to an emergency electrical system.

Smoke alarms shall emit a signal when the batteries are low. Wiring shall be permanent and without a disconnecting switch other than as required for over current protection.

Exceptions:

- 1. Smoke alarms are permitted to be solely battery operated in existing buildings where no construction is taking place.
- 2. Smoke alarms are permitted to be solely battery operated in buildings that are not served from a commercial power source.
- 3. Smoke alarms are permitted to be solely battery operated in existing areas of buildings undergoing alterations or repairs that do not result in the removal of interior walls or ceiling finishes exposing the structure, unless there is an attic, crawl space or basement available which could provide access for building wiring without the removal of interior finishes.

R314.5 Interconnection: Where more than one smoke alarm is required to be installed within an individual dwelling or sleeping unit, the smoke alarms shall be interconnected in such a manner that the activation of one alarm will activate all of the alarms in the individual unit. The alarm shall be clearly audible in all bedrooms over background noise levels with all intervening doors closed.

Exceptions:

- 1. Interconnection is not required in buildings that are not undergoing alterations, repairs or construction of any kind.
- 2. Smoke alarms in existing areas are not required to be interconnected where alterations or repairs do not result in the removal of interior wall or ceiling finishes exposing the structure, unless there is an attic, crawl space or basement available which could provide access for interconnection without the removal of interior finishes.

R314.6 Existing Group R-3 Occupancies: Existing buildings housing Group R-3 occupancies established prior to the effective date of these regulations may have their use continued if they conform or are made to conform to provisions of these regulations to the extent that reasonable and adequate life safety against the hazards of fire, panic and explosion is substantially provided. Additional means of egress, the installation of automatic sprinkler systems, automatic fire alarm system or other life safety measures may be required to provide reasonable and adequate safety.

For purposes of clarification, Health and Safety Code Section 13113.7 is repeated.

- a. Except as otherwise provided in this section, a smoke detector, approved and listed by the State Fire Marshal pursuant to Section 13114, shall be installed, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions in each dwelling intended for human occupancy within the earliest applicable time period as follows:
 - 1. For all dwelling units intended for human occupancy, upon the owner's application on or after January 1, 1985, for a permit for alterations, repairs, or additions, exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000).
 - 2. For all other dwelling units intended for human occupancy on or after January 1, 1987.

The Building Services Division in an effort to provide better customer service while performing services to the public has developed the following Declaration Of Installation for certain permits with inspections not requiring the inspector to enter the structure or home.

Access to the home is <u>not</u> required to perform inspections if the Declaration of Installation is used for the following permit types:

- 1. Reroof
- 2. Electrical service change-out and Ag power
- 3. Pool or spa
- 4. Exterior HVAC change-out
- 5. Siding replacement
- 6. Window replacement
- 7. Exterior water heater
- 8. Solar systems; i.e. PV systems, water heater
- 9. Detached accessory structures

The **Declaration of Installation** below may be used in lieu of the applicant being home to allow access for the inspector to inspect the Smoke Detectors. All other projects shall require access to the structure for inspection of the Smoke Detectors.

DECLARATION OF INSTALLATION UNDER THE PENALTY OF PERJURY

As Owner/Contractor, I/we affirm and declare under the penalty of perjury, under the laws of the State of California by our signatures below as Owner/Contractor, will comply prior to final inspection with Items A & B as specified herein:

- A. The Owner/Contractor have read and clearly understand the aforementioned 2010 California Residential Code (CRC) *Carbon Monoxide Alarm* requirements.
- B. The Owner/Contractor is responsible for installing Carbon Monoxide Alarms prior to final inspection as per the aforementioned building code and maintaining such installation. Smoke Alarms will also be installed prior to final inspection as per the 2010 CRC.

Owner's signature:	Date:
Contractor's name (print):	CSLB License:
Contractor's signature:	Date:
Project Address:	Permit #: