

Clarification of the new smoke detector law, 527 CMR 32

1. Residences built after January 1, 1975 are **NOT** required by law to change detectors or locations, however detector upgrades are recommended.
2. Residences built before January 1, 1975, are required to have detectors utilizing both ionization and photoelectric technology **unless** the detector location is within 20 feet of a kitchen or bathroom (that contains a tub or shower). If the detector is within 20 feet then it must be a photoelectric detector. These detectors may be hardwired, battery or a combination of both. Detectors must be on each habitable level, at the base of each stairway, and outside of each separate sleeping area.

Example: A single story ranch house built before 1975 with battery operated ionization detectors in place. The detector outside the sleeping is most likely within 20 feet of the bathroom so that detector would have to be replaced with a photoelectric type detector. The detector at the bottom of the basement stairs has to be both technologies, so the simplest way is to add a photoelectric detector next to the existing ionization detector. In this example those are the only changes needed.

3. Residences built before January 1, 1975 meeting the law with a low voltage fire alarm system (such as smoke detectors powered from a burglar alarm system) are **NOT** required to change anything.
4. Residences built between January 1, 1975 and August 27, 1997 are required to have detectors on each habitable level with a detector at the base of each stairway and a detector outside of each separate sleeping area. These detectors **MUST** be hardwired and interconnected. They may be either photoelectric or ionization type.
5. Residences built after August 27, 1997 and before January 1, 2008 are required to have detectors on each habitable level, at the base of each

stairway, outside of each separate sleeping area and inside each bedroom. These detectors **must** be hardwired and interconnected. They must also have a battery backup. They may be either photoelectric or ionization, except in the case of a detector within 20 feet of a kitchen or bathroom (that contains a tub or shower) in which case that detector **must** be a photoelectric type.

6. Residences built after January 1, 2008 are required to have detectors on each habitable level, at the base of each stairway, outside of each separate sleeping area and inside each bedroom. These detectors **must** be hardwired and interconnected. They must also have a battery backup. They may be either photoelectric or dual technology (photoelectric and ionization), except in the case of a detector within 20 feet of a kitchen or bathroom (that contains a tub or shower) in which case that detector **must** be a photoelectric type. If there is a garage attached to or under the residence there must be a single heat detector in the garage. **This heat detector must be compatible with the smoke detectors.**