



Smoke alarms as part of a home security system

The Building Commission has received a number of enquiries from home owners and providers of residential security systems as to whether smoke alarms that are powered through a home security system in dwellings subject to sale, rent or hire are compliant with the State's smoke alarm laws.

What are the smoke alarm laws?

The Building Regulations 2012 (the Regulations) in Western Australia require owners of dwellings to have compliant smoke alarms installed prior to sale, rent or hire. To comply with the Regulations, owners must ensure that the smoke alarms are:

- in accordance with the Building Code of Australia (BCA) applicable at the time of installation of the alarms (other than the provisions about evacuation lighting);
- not more than 10 years old at the time of the transfer of ownership, or making the dwelling available for rent or hire;
- in working order; and
- permanently connected to consumer mains power (as defined below).

Under the regulations a smoke alarm is considered permanently connected to consumer mains power if:

- it is electrically connected to a permanent supply of electricity to the dwelling; and
- an electrician would ordinarily be required to connect or disconnect the alarm.

Can smoke alarms be powered through a security system?

Smoke alarms that are powered through a home security system in dwellings subject to sale, rent or hire may not comply with the requirements for smoke alarms.

While the home security system may be on 240 volt from the consumer mains power, a feed of 12 volt to the smoke alarm would not comply with the requirement for smoke alarms to be permanently connected to consumer mains power.

The power for smoke alarms must be separate to the power source for the home security system and the smoke alarms permanently connected to consumer mains power.

The Regulations provide a mechanism for the relevant local government to consider and approve an 'alternative building solution' for a particular case on the basis that the alternative solution meets the performance requirement of the BCA relating to fire detection and early warning (P2.3.2 of the BCA Volume Two).

Disclaimer

The information contained in this bulletin is provided as general information only and should not be relied upon as legal advice or as an accurate statement of the relevant legislation provisions. If you are uncertain as to your legal obligations you should obtain independent legal advice.

October 2014