

Frequently asked questions about the changes to regulations on smoke alarms

Advice Direct Scotland is keen to ensure that Scots homeowners and landlords have access to proper advice over the potential implications of new regulations on interlinked smoke alarms which are due to come into place next week.

- From 1 February all homes in Scotland will be subject to a new set of standards for fire safety and smoke alarms.
- It will require a smoke alarm to be installed in the room used most for daytime living, for example in a living room.
- Others will have to be placed in “circulation spaces” like hallways or landings on every storey of the property, and all smoke alarms must be interlinked and ceiling-mounted.
- A heat alarm must also be installed in every kitchen, and a carbon monoxide detector should be placed in any property where there is a carbon-fuelled appliance like a boiler, fire or heater.

The legislation was originally due to come into force in 2021, however it was delayed by The Scottish Government because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Last week, Housing Secretary Shona Robison said the

regulations are “designed to protect and save lives” and there will be “no penalties for non-compliance”, stressing that people will not face penalties “if they need more time”.

[Advice Direct Scotland](#), which runs the national consumer advice service consumeradvice.scot, has issued guidance to homeowners and landlords who are responsible for ensuring the new standards are met.

The organisation warns that if properties fail to meet the conditions it could impact upon the property’s Home Report when it is put on the market for sale, and in some extreme cases, home insurance policies could become void.

Anyone in Scotland who wants advice on consumer issues can contact consumeradvice.scot for free on 0808 164 6000. Specialist advisers are available from 9am to 5pm, Monday-Friday.

Colin Mathieson, spokesperson for Advice Direct Scotland, said: “The new regulations will come into effect next week following a 12-month delay.

“It will be for the property owner, such as the owner occupier or the landlord, to ensure these standards are met and this will include paying the costs of purchasing and installing any new equipment.

“We have put together a list of frequently asked questions for Scots, as well as information videos to help those required to make the necessary changes.

“It is important that everyone in Scotland checks if their property complies, as there is a potential impact on insurance policies, but the government has also made clear there will be no penalties for non-compliance.”

Advice Direct Scotland has provided answers for some Frequently Asked Questions about the change:

- **What if I am a tenant?** If you are a tenant renting from the private sector, the responsibility for making the changes rests with your private landlord and they should already be complying with the regulations. If you are a social tenant (housing association or local authority), your landlord should have been informed of the changes and should have made plans to implement them by 1st February 2022.
- **Do all alarms in different properties in a block of flats have to be linked?** There will be no obligation to link alarms between different properties in a block of flats or a tenement. You will not have to put fire alarms in communal areas.
- **Must the alarms be linked in my rented property if it has housing association shared ownership?** You will be responsible for ensuring the property is in line with the regulations unless it is stated in the occupancy agreement that the housing association has responsibility for managing such matters.
- **Is there a specific type of alarm that should be bought?** The Scottish Government advises that either mains-wired or tamper-proof long-life lithium battery alarms be used. If you choose mains-wired alarms, a qualified electrician will be needed to install them. You should check that systems meet the requirements before purchasing them.
- **Is there any financial support to help me buy the equipment needed to meet these regulations?** If you are the property owner, you will be expected to pay for any new equipment in most circumstances. However, your local council may offer discretionary funding to assist with

the cost if you are finding it difficult to do this.

- **Will my home insurance be affected if my home doesn't meet the new regulations?** This will depend on your insurance provider. In the most extreme cases, not meeting the regulations could void the insurance coverage. However, you should speak to your insurance provider if unsure to see how your policy will be affected.