

# Smoke Detection

**A fire strikes when you least expect it, often during the night. It also spreads very rapidly, but the real killer is smoke. If you are asleep when a fire starts and you don't have a smoke alarm to wake you, your chances of surviving are zero.**

Over 80% of all the deaths that occur as a result of fires, happen in the home and you are twice as likely to die in a fire at home if you haven't got a working smoke alarm. In addition to this, the risk of being killed or injured by a fire has been estimated at more than 10 times likely in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Section 67 of the Housing Act 2004 states it is a mandatory requirement that mains smoke alarms are installed in HMOs and are maintained in a proper working order.

## WHY DO WE NEED SMOKE DETECTORS?

Smoke alarms can detect fires at their earliest stages - and then sound a loud warning to alert people so that they can escape from a burning building. Detectors have been used in hotels, factories and offices for many years, often because their use is a required part of the building's fire precautions as laid down in the Fire Precautions Act of 1971. Only in the last 10 years have smoke alarms become commonplace for the home.

The 1991 Smoke Detectors Act, requires that all new houses that have been built since 1992 must, by law, have a mains smoke detector installed with the minimum requirement being one smoke alarm on each level of the building. This is not a piece of legislation aimed specifically at residential letting property, but aimed at all new buildings. If an agent installs smoke alarms into properties that he manages or they already exist, care must be taken in ensuring that it is clear from the letting agreement who is responsible for the maintenance of the detectors including testing and battery replacement. Silence on this matter could mean that the landlord or agent is responsible, and in the case of a fire could be held liable for being negligent in their duties.

The BS 5839: Part 6 British Standard that deals with fire alarm systems in dwellings was amended in 2004 and recommends that the choice of detector should take account of the type of fire that may be expected and the need to avoid false alarms. The standard now recommends that in new build properties heat alarms should be installed in kitchens and the 'principle habitable room' e.g. the living room, in addition to any smoke alarms used in the escape routes.

## BENEFITS OF THE SERVICE

elecheck<sup>^</sup> install and maintain a variety of smoke alarms. Smoke alarms incorporating either an ionisation or an optical sensor are available in mains only, mains with Alkaline battery back-up, or mains with rechargeable Lithium back-up formats. Strobe light and vibrating pad alarms are available for the hard of hearing or the deaf. The pad is placed under a mattress or pillow and when smoke is detected, the alarm will sound and set off the light and pad. Radio linked alarms can also be installed so that when one detects a fire, they all sound.

To ensure that alarms are in good working order and the possibility of any unrevealed faults are identified, elecheck<sup>^</sup> recommends preventative measures be taken to ensure the continual reliability of the system. All manufacturers of smoke alarms recommend that their products are replaced after 10 years use and it is recommended that a system is serviced four times a year.

elecheck<sup>^</sup> choose to use Ei Aico mains smoke detectors because of their reliability and have installed over 20,000 of these in residential properties throughout the UK and manage the maintenance/ battery replacement of over 30,000 detectors every year. All detectors installed are placed on our maintenance contact with detectors being inspected regularly to ensure that they are operating correctly.

## WHY USE ELECHECK?

- ✓ A 'one stop shop' for all your compliance requirements
- ✓ A nationwide company with punctual, polite and efficient 'local' engineers
- ✓ Happy to work outside of 'normal' hours to ensure minimum disruption to business
- ✓ 99% of our clients would recommend us to others\*
- ✓ We give advice in straightforward everyday language – without all the jargon
- ✓ Registered, approved and backed by leading industry bodies

\* Customer satisfaction survey 2007

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE**  
[www.elecheck.co.uk](http://www.elecheck.co.uk)

These notes have been produced as guidance only and are not definitive or intended for specific reference. Please refer to the following for more information.

BS5839 Part 6 2004 Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems for Buildings  
 Smoke Detectors Act 1991  
 BS 5446 Pt 1:2000  
 Housing Act 2004  
 Fire Precautions Act 1971

Pictures 1 - elecheck<sup>^</sup> regularly inspect smoke detectors to ensure they are operating correctly. 2 - 5 We install a variety of Aico detectors.

