

Installing Smoke Alarms

Only well-placed, working smoke alarms can provide the critical early warning needed to save lives.

Most residential fires that result in injury or death occur at night when people are asleep and where there is no working smoke alarm. When deciding on the position of smoke alarms in your home, it is important to place the alarms in areas where people are sleeping.

Laws in Western Australia require homes subject to sale, transfer of ownership, rent or hire to have mains powered smoke alarms installed. These smoke alarms should be placed in the following locations:

- In SINGLE-LEVEL homes smoke alarms must be installed on or near the ceiling:
 - In all hallways leading to bedrooms
 - Where there is no hallway, in an area near the bedrooms.
- In MULTI-LEVEL homes smoke alarms must be located:
 - On each level containing bedrooms (see above instructions for a single level home), and
 - On every other level not containing bedrooms, even if they consist only of bathrooms, laundries, carparking etc. The favoured location for the smoke alarm is in the path of travel people will most likely take to evacuate the building, such as on a wall or ceiling in the stairway.

- When installing mains powered smoke alarms, always use a licensed electrician.
- DFES recommends installing a photoelectric smoke alarm in sleeping areas and paths of travel to sleeping areas.
- Regularly maintain your smoke alarm. Every month test your smoke alarm by holding down the test button until you hear a loud alert tone. Every six months vacuum your smoke alarm with a soft brush attachment to remove the build-up of dust and cobwebs.
- Replace your smoke alarms every 10 years.

If your ceiling is made of concrete and the dwelling is not already provided with a mains powered smoke alarm, the laws allow you to install a 10 year, lithium powered smoke alarm with non-removable battery.

Where you have more than one smoke alarm installed in your home, DFES recommends that your smoke alarms be interconnected. (It should be noted that all dwellings approved for construction from the 1 May 2015 require interconnection of smoke alarms). Interconnection means when one smoke alarm detects smoke all the smoke alarms in the dwelling will sound the alarm.

DFES also recommends additional smoke alarms are installed in every bedroom, especially where there are children or where a person sleeps with the door closed.

This increases the chance that a sleeping person will hear the alarm sound.

Smoke alarms are extremely sensitive and may detect smoke and moisture created by common household activities. To reduce the likelihood of nuisance alarms, the smoke alarms should not be installed near the kitchen, laundry, bathroom, air conditioners, heaters, fans and other temperature control devices.

In the event of a fire

- Crawl low under smoke.
- Assist or alert any people in danger, but only if it is safe to do so.
- Go to your safe meeting place, such as your letter box.
- Call **000** (triple zero).
- Wait for firefighters to arrive.
- Do not re-enter a burning house under any circumstances.



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The diagrams below show the minimum placement of smoke alarms on standard house plans.

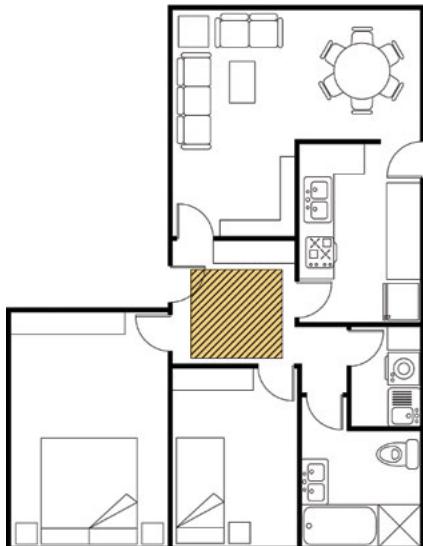


Diagram 1 – Two bedroom unit/
apartment/flat/house

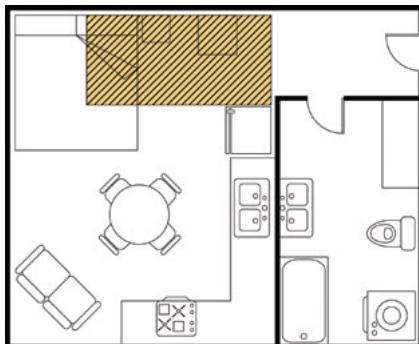


Diagram 2 – Bungalow/bedsit

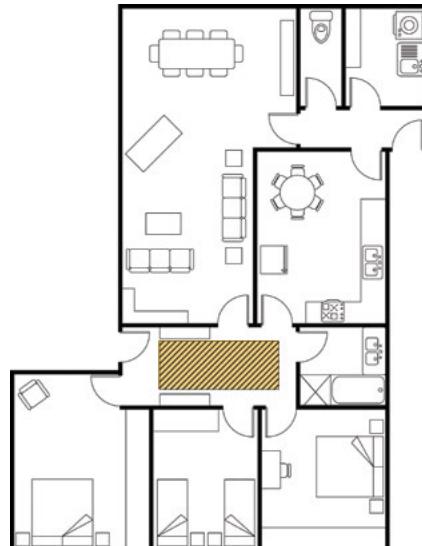


Diagram 3 – Three bedroom house

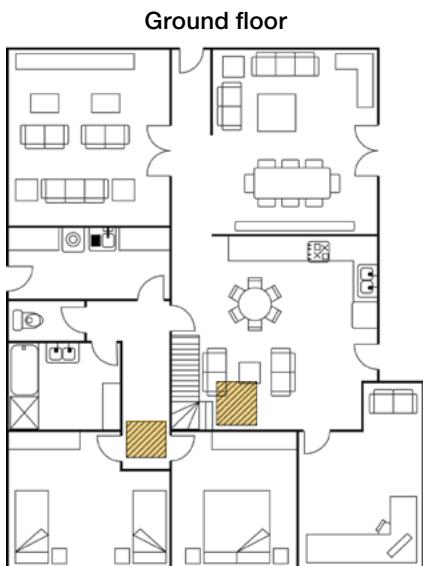


Diagram 4 – Two storey, four bedroom house

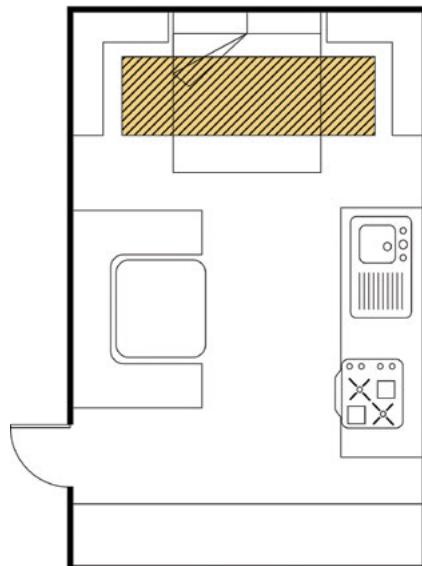
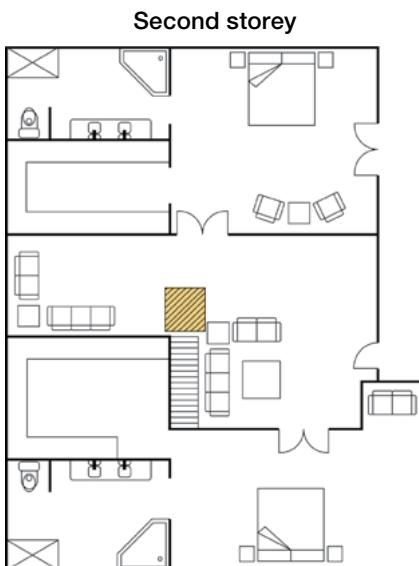


Diagram 5 – Park Home
(also suitable for caravans)

**Only working
smoke alarms
save lives.**

In all types of accommodation, at the very least, a smoke alarm should be placed in the area shaded in diagonal stripes. Smoke alarms must be placed on the ceiling and at least 30 cm from any walls.

Source: *Basic Home Fire Safety Materials* (AFAC)

