



QUEENSLAND SMOKE ALARM LEGISLATION

WHAT YOU REALLY NEED TO KNOW

450,000*

Number of QLD
rental properties

÷

768*

Working days
left until the
deadline

=

586*

Houses that must
be made compliant
every day to meet
the deadline

THE FACTS

THE NEW SMOKE ALARM LEGISLATION EXPLAINED

By 1st January 2022, smoke alarms in every Queensland rental property must be:

- ▶ Installed in every bedroom of the property
- ▶ Must be 240v hardwired or 10 year lithium alarms – 9v alarms will not be allowed
- ▶ Must be photoelectric alarms – ionisation alarms (the most common form of alarm) will not be allowed
- ▶ Must be interconnected so that if one alarm sounds, they all do

For most landlords, this will mean that every current smoke alarm must be replaced and new ones installed – as very few rental properties have interconnected, photoelectric alarms inside bedrooms. Depending on the number of bedrooms and storeys in the property this could cost between \$500 – \$2,000.

HOW MANY SMOKE ALARMS ARE REQUIRED?

Smoke alarms must be installed on each storey:

- ▶ In every bedroom
- ▶ In hallways which connect bedrooms and the rest of the dwelling; or
- ▶ If there is no hallway, between the bedrooms and other parts of the storey; and
- ▶ If there are no bedrooms on a storey at least one smoke alarm must be installed in the most likely path of travel to exit the dwelling

WHAT TYPE OF SMOKE ALARMS ARE REQUIRED?

- ▶ Smoke alarms must be either hardwired or powered by a non-removable 10 year battery
- ▶ Smoke alarms must not contain an ionisation sensor
- ▶ Smoke alarms must be less than 10 years old
- ▶ Smoke alarms must operate when tested





The Association is the not-for-profit Industry Association representing the national smoke alarm industry. The Association leads and supports a professional smoke alarm industry for a safer community. The Association provides independent and unbiased advice to property managers, landlords, tenants and home owners across Australia. All Association services are free. We don't service, sell or install smoke alarms. We tell it how it is without fear, favour or commercial interest.

We are real people with very significant experience in all things smoke alarms and property management. You can email or call us with any question you have in regards to smoke alarms, legislation, installation and compliance and we will give you straight, unbiased advice and assistance.

Our team of experts work with the Association on a voluntary (unpaid) basis. We all work for the same goals which include - a safer community through effective smoke alarm legislation, simply implemented.

1300 872 303



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Thank you for requesting our report on the Queensland smoke alarm legislation.

The rental industry has a crisis - a very real and damaging crisis. This crisis will fully reveal itself on 31st December 2021. Whilst we are all out celebrating New Years in 2021, thousands of landlords will be losing their income, tenants will not be able to renew their leases, thousands of rental properties will not be able to be rented and property managers will be blamed. And when the PM tries to fix it, they will find that the cost of fixing it is three times the cost of what it is today. Try explaining that to your landlords.

I urge you to read this report thoroughly. But even more importantly I implore you to take action now. If you don't, you will be part of the looming crisis and you certainly won't be enjoying New Years 2021.



Louie Naumovski
CEO of Smoke Alarm Association Australia Ltd.

FAKE NEWS

Fake news is the enemy of the property MANAGER and landlord.

A lot of what you know is wrong and there is a lot you probably don't know. Here we dispel the Fake News and tell you the real facts.

⊗ Fake News

The Government will change the date and allow us more time, so I don't need to worry.

☑ The Fact

The laws are legislated and they have been since 2016. The date can't be changed. Both QFES and the Government have told us categorically that the date will not change, and rental properties must comply by 1st January 2022. Their view is - "we gave you 5 years to get this done, so you have absolutely no excuses". They have also been quick to remind us that the penalty for non-compliance is \$500 and that it will be enforced.

⊗ Fake News

I've got 3 years before I need to get this done so my landlords don't need to worry about this now.

☑ The Fact

Yes you have got 3 years. You and the other 450,000 landlords – all of whom need to get it done inside the 3 years. So you have got 3 years, but the longer you wait, the chances of you getting it done shrivel to almost zero.

Let's look at the numbers as at November 2018:

450,000 rental properties to be upgraded, 790 working days left until the deadline. That's 569 properties a day that has to be upgraded - every day for the next 3 years. The obvious question follows – who is going to do this? Just 2% of rental properties have so far been made compliant.



⊗ Fake News

My smoke alarm servicing company will be able to do it when I want them to – no problem at all.

☑ The Fact

Every smoke alarm company is experiencing the same two problems:

1. Convincing property managers and landlords to act now. Most are thinking they can wait and the pressure is mounting on the smoke alarm companies. They all have limited resources – there is only so much they can do, and as every day passes they are less and less likely to be able to upgrade all the properties they currently service.
2. Our member smoke alarm companies are ready now to upgrade properties for you, but their schedules are filling up fast. All the smoke alarm companies combined plus all the available electricians in Queensland won't be able to cope with the demand over the next 3 years. You need to act now to ensure you won't be one of those left behind and managing or owning an un-rentable property.

⊗ Fake News

If my smoke alarm servicing company can't help me, there are plenty of others I can go to.

☑ The Fact

Yes, you could look at finding another company. But the longer you leave it, the less likely you are to have any success. Every smoke alarm servicing company is in the same boat, facing the same pressures and all have limited resources. This really is a case of first in, best dressed. Those that move now will meet the deadline. Those that wait will almost certainly miss out. And then you have a real crisis on your hands.

And please don't think that your local electrician is going to be able to help. Electricians will be in high demand and almost impossible to get. How big is your rent roll? If it's 500 and an electrician can do 6 properties a day – can you secure their services for 4 months straight exclusively?

It is already impossible for every rental property to be made compliant by the deadline and every day that passes this gets worse. Queensland simply doesn't have the resources to make 450,000 rental properties compliant before the deadline.

IF NOT COMPLIANT, THE PROPERTY CANNOT BE LEASED, EXISTING TENANCIES CANNOT BE RENEWED AND THE PROPERTY CAN'T BE SOLD. THE LANDLORD WILL HAVE NO INCOME AND YOU WILL GET THE BLAME.

⊗ Fake News

The longer I wait, the price of smoke alarms will come down and my landlords will save money.

☑ The Fact

Even if smoke alarms do come down in price, the cost of installing them will continue to rise. The basic rules of supply and demand will show that when there is more demand than there is supply – prices go up.

Whatever your service provider is charging you to install alarms now is the lowest they will ever be. The prices will be higher in 2019, higher again in 2020 and through the roof in 2021. With thousands and thousands of landlords and their property managers trying to get their properties compliant at the same time, and with few people able to do it for them, they can pretty much charge what they want – because you will be desperate. Installers will make a fortune at the expense of the landlord.

THE LAST THING WE WANT TO SEE IS ANOTHER PINK BATTS FIASCO WITH UNQUALIFIED COWBOYS SEEING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A QUICK BUCK. AS THE DEADLINE LOOMS, OPPORTUNISTIC OPERATORS WILL JUMP IN WITHOUT THE REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND PUT PEOPLE'S LIVES AT RISK. AND PRICES WILL GO UP AND UP AND UP.

⊗ Fake News

My landlords simply won't spend the money until they have to.

☑ The Fact

Absolutely true, and why should they? But where this fake news is actually wrong is that now is the time they have to. If they don't commit now they face the very real possibility that their property will become un-rentable. This means no income for the landlord and no income for you.

If you explain to your landlord that if they don't upgrade now they may not have any income from the property after December 2021 and you won't be able to rent their property out, they should realise their predicament. Yes they will hate having to do it, but common sense says they must.

⊗ Fake News

My landlords don't have the money to do the upgrade.

☑ The Fact

Maybe true but there are solutions to this. There is no doubt this is a real financial burden for a landlord. With smoke alarms costing around \$200 each at the moment (will go up and up over the next 3 years) and with an average rental property requiring 4-5 alarms, this will cost a landlord between \$800 - \$1,000 to upgrade. Many properties will cost more, some less.

Most smoke alarm servicing companies who are members of our Association offer interest-free finance for landlords. Landlords can spread the cost over 12 months – interest free. So instead of having to find \$1,000 upfront, they can spread the cost over 12 months with monthly payments of around \$85.00. That can come out of their rent as you collect it and greatly eases the financial burden on the landlord.

TO FIND A SMOKE ALARM SERVICING COMPANY WHO IS A PROFESSIONAL MEMBER OF THE SMOKE ALARM ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA AND WHO OFFERS INTEREST-FREE FINANCE, PLEASE VISIT [HTTPS://SAAAUSTRALIA.ORG.AU/FOUNDATION-MEMBERS/](https://saaaustralia.org.au/foundation-members/)

⊗ Fake News

It doesn't matter what brand of smoke alarm are installed as long as they meet Australian standards.

☑ The Fact

The smoke alarms certainly have to meet Australian Standards, but the brand seriously matters. Smoke alarms certainly aren't equal – there are some great smoke alarms and there are some duds. It's the duds that cause the problems – they false alarm, they beep, they don't cope with humidity. And that creates a nightmare for property managers with tenants complaining all the time and you having to organise tradespeople to re-attend, over and over again.

But there is a much bigger issue that you have to consider. Because all the smoke alarms in a property have to be interconnected (one goes off, they all go off), and because you can't interconnect different brands of alarms, if the property has a faulty alarm, and the smoke alarm is no longer available (or the installer is no longer available) then it is very possible that every smoke alarm in the property will have to be replaced (not just the faulty one) – costing the landlord all over again.

If your service provider doesn't carry that brand of alarm, they have to go to the property, identify the problem, see the brand of the alarm, leave the property without fixing the problem, go and buy that brand of the alarm, go back to the property and change it over. Inconvenience to the tenant, a hassle for you and the property will be non-compliant until all this is done. Once again there is a solution to this.

SMOKE ALARM SERVICE PROVIDERS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION ALL CARRY THE SAME BRANDS OF SMOKE ALARMS AND HAVE STOCK TO FIX PROBLEMS ON THE ONE VISIT. NO MATTER WHICH MEMBER INSTALLED IT, ANY OTHER MEMBER WILL BE ABLE TO FIX IT – ON THE SPOT.

⊗ Fake News ☑ The Fact

My smoke alarm service provider won't allow me to book my properties in advance – say in November 2019.

If your smoke alarm service provider won't let you do that, then you should change service providers. All smoke alarm members of the Association will dedicate their resources to your entire rent roll for an agreed date in the future. You can book your rent roll in to be upgraded in say, July 2019, providing you peace of mind and putting you ahead of all your competitors.

This comes with a warning though. Everyone has limited resources and smoke alarm service companies are already quickly filling their schedules right through 2019 and 2020. Once they are fully booked, they won't be able to take more jobs. So once again, you need to move right now if you wish to pre-book your rent roll.

⊗ Fake News ☑ The Fact

This all seems so hard. I don't have anyone to turn to to help me achieve 100% compliance by the deadline at the lowest possible cost for my landlords.

This is the most fake of all. This is why the Smoke Alarm Association exists – to provide you exactly that help, assistance and guidance.

We represent the majority of professional smoke alarm servicing and installing companies and we will work with you and your preferred member to ensure you achieve compliance and meet the deadline. We are a telephone call away and we can solve every one of your problems and make what seems to be a difficult task really simple.

WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?

You need to prepare a plan and you need to act now. You simply cannot delay this any longer. It is quite possible that up to 50% of all rental properties in Queensland won't be compliant by the end of 2021 because property managers and landlords didn't act quickly enough and there not being sufficient resources in Queensland to get this done. Please remember the situation as of November 2018:



What you should do right now is contact us at the Association. We will guide you through this and ensure you achieve compliance for your landlords before the deadline. But you need to do this now.

You have an obligation to your landlords, and to your own business to achieve this deadline. If you don't, your landlord won't have an income and you won't be collecting your fees.

We are not trying to be sensationalist in this report – we are explaining exactly how it is. As an industry, we are facing a huge crisis, and you can't afford to be caught up in it. We can ensure you are not, if you act now and contact us now.

ALL OUR SERVICES ARE FREE

1300 872 303

ceo@saaaaustralia.org.au

www.saaaaustralia.org.au



Property managers and landlords are advised to only deal with an Association member. Members are committed to a strict Code of Conduct, professional standards, transparency and honesty.

*Estimates as at 30th November 2018



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ceo@saaaustralia.org.au | www.saaaustralia.org.au

www.countdown2022.com.au

