



Changes to current legislation

Every home in Scotland must have interlinked fire alarms by February 2022. Interlinked means if one goes off, they all go off, so you will always hear an alarm wherever you are in your home. The new law has come about because of the Grenfell fire in London in 2017, and it applies to all Scottish homes. It is the property owner's responsibility for meeting the new standard.

What this means for homeowners?

By February 2022 every home must have:

- one smoke alarm in the living room or the room you use most
- one smoke alarm in every hallway or landing
- one heat alarm in the kitchen

All smoke and heat alarms should be mounted on the ceiling and be interlinked. If you live in a modern property constructed within the last 10 years, it is likely that it will already meet this standard as interlinked smoke and heat detection have been a feature of building regulations since October 2010. Older properties may require additional detectors to be fitted to meet the new standards. In any case, fire detection and alarm systems require regular testing and detector heads are often marked with expiry dates, usually between 7-10 years after the date of manufacture. If you have any doubt as to the suitability of any existing fire alarm and detection system within your property, we recommend that you seek advice from a competent professional, such as an electrician or alarms specialist, on the subject. They will be able to inspect and test your current system and advise if any necessary repairs or upgrades are required. In dwellings with open plan kitchen / living areas, it is likely that you may need to install both a heat detector in the kitchen area and a smoke detector in the living area.

If you have a carbon-fuelled appliance – like a boiler, fire, heater or flue – in any room, you must also have a carbon monoxide detector in that room, but this does **not** need to be linked to the fire alarms. It has been a legal requirement under the building regulations that a carbon monoxide detector must be installed where any new or replacement combustion appliance is installed since 1st October 2013. If you have carried out such work to your property since this date you may find you already comply with this requirement.

It is the responsibility of the property owner to ensure their home meets the new standards. Financial help may be available to older and disabled homeowners on low income to assist with the cost of installing any new system through local care and repair schemes. In Perth and Kinross, the care and repair scheme is administered by Caledonia Housing Association who can be contacted via telephone on 0800 678 1228 or via e-mail at info@caledoniaha.co.uk.

If you fail to upgrade your property to meet the new standards this may invalidate home insurance policy.

What this means for Tenants?

It is the responsibility of your landlord to ensure your property meets this standard. This includes private landlords, housing associations and, in the case of council owned properties, Perth and Kinross Council. If you have any concerns as to the current provision of detection in your home we would recommend raising this matter with your landlord.

Should your Landlord fail to ensure the property meets the standard and makes no issue to resolve the issue prior to February 2022 you can escalate the matter by taking your landlord to tribunal. More information on this process can be found here: [Tell your landlord you want to go to the Tribunal - mygov.scot](#)

Do I need a building warrant?

The tolerable standards allow for sealed battery or hard-wired detectors to be installed, providing they are interlinked. Detectors can be linked by radio technology or via a wired connection. If you chose to install a hard wired system, you may be required to obtain a building warrant prior to installation in certain properties.

If your property is a flat, including maisonettes and flats with their own independent entrance, you need a building warrant to carry out electrical works to your property, including installing hard-wired mains powered detectors. If you live in a house where the floor level of the top most storey is more than 4.5m from the adjacent ground level, which in most cases consists of 3 or more storeys, you will also require a building warrant prior to carrying out any works.

Information on how to apply for a building warrant can be found [here](#).

Who can assist in installing smoke and heat detectors within my property?

As noted previously, it is the property owner's responsibility to ensure compliance with the new tolerable standards. If you are unable to install these yourself, we would recommend contacting an electrician to carry out the installation on your behalf. There are a number of trade bodies available which will allow you to search for a competent electrician in your area such as NICEIC, SELECT and NAPIT. You can find more information about these registration bodies on their websites:

<https://www.select.org.uk/>

<https://www.niceic.com/>

<https://www.napit.org.uk/>

We would always recommend that where a hard-wired system is preferred, that the installation is carried out by a person who possesses technical knowledge, relevant practical skills, and experience for the nature of the electrical work undertaken. Although in some cases no building warrant is required to carry out the works, there is still a requirement that works must meet the standards. If you wish for an electrician to evidence compliance with the standards you can request an installation certificate for the alarm system – this certificate should refer to BS 5839 Part 6. We would recommend making the installer aware of this request prior to carrying out the works to ensure they are able to provide such.