

## Why Do We Perform Inspections?

The Fire Department inspects residential smoke detectors (as well as water heater strapping and window security bars) under City Ordinance 8.12 and an addendum 907.2.10.5.4 to Article 9 of the California Fire Code which states, "Upon sale of any residential dwelling and factory built housing, the seller shall have installed therein, permanently wired or battery powered approved dual Photoelectric and Ionization type detectors of products of combustion other than heat only, commonly known as dual sensor smoke alarm. The smoke alarms are required to be State Fire Marshal approved and listed. The seller must obtain certification from the Fire Department of the installation and proper operation prior to close of sale of property." The Building Department inspects new construction of single family residences prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy.

The address of the property (if it is a condominium, we will need the condo complex name and the unit number),

- The full name of the realtor/seller and their permanent daytime phone number
- Name of the escrow office.
- Escrow number
- Name of escrow officer

In the event of a fire, a home without an operating smoke detector is twice as likely to have a fire related death as a home that has a smoke detector. Unfortunately, 25 percent of the nation's households do not have operational smoke detectors.

## What Will The Inspector Look For?

### • STREET ADDRESS:

The street address shall be displayed on the residence in a place and position as to be easily visible and legible from the street. All address numerals shall be of color contrasting to the color of the structure. An

address that is illuminating (lighted) shall be in working condition.

### • WATER HEATERS:

Water heaters shall be strapped (secured) properly with seismic straps.

### • SECURITY BARS:

Residences that have security bars on the windows in sleeping areas shall have a release device (hand or foot release) that operates properly.

### • OTHER SAFETY VIOLATIONS:

The inspector conducting the inspection has the right to address any fire hazard or code enforcement issue that they may come across.

The inspector will be watchful of electrical hazards, illegal /non-conforming structural alterations (including unpermitted garage conversions), and other safety and health violations.

### • RESIDENTIAL SMOKE DETECTORS:

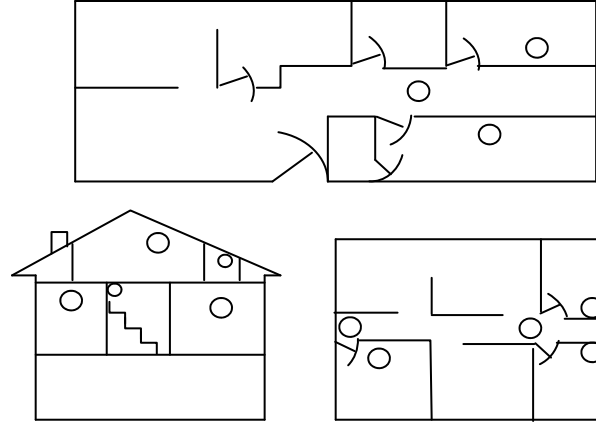
- Structures built before 1991 without hardwire/battery backup smoke detectors shall have dual sensor (photoelectric / ionization) battery smoke detectors installed in sleeping areas and in areas that separate living areas from sleeping areas.
- Structures built after 1991 with hardwire/battery backup smoke detectors shall be replaced with hardwire/battery dual sensor (photoelectric / ionization) smoke detectors in sleeping areas and in areas that separate living areas from sleeping areas.

\* Structures built after 1991 that are partially wired with pre-existing hardwired smoke detectors (hallways, stairwells & sleeping areas) dual sensor (photoelectric / ionization) smoke detectors. dual sensor (photoelectric / ionization) battery powered smoke detectors will be accepted in areas that are not hardwired for those required areas (sleeping areas and areas that separate living areas from

sleeping areas).

- \* Structures built after 1991 that were not wired for hardwired/battery smoke detectors in sleeping areas and areas that separate living areas from sleeping areas are NOT in compliance with current fire codes. However, battery dual sensor (photoelectric / ionization) smoke detectors will be accepted for those areas.

## Proper Placement Of Smoke Detectors



## How Are Inspections Scheduled?

To request a smoke detector & safety inspection, the realtor (or the seller when a realtor is not a party to the transaction) should call the Cathedral City Fire Department at (760) 770-8200. The following information is required:

We will need to know if the smoke detector is hooked up to an alarm system and if it is monitored by a commercial alarm company. **IF THE SMOKE DETECTOR IS LINKED TO AN ALARM SYSTEM THAT IS MONITORED, IT WILL BE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE SURE THE SYSTEM IS TURNED OFF PRIOR TO THE INSPECTION TO AVOID THE POSSIBILITY OF A FALSE ALARM.**

When working with a realtor, we ask the agent to meet with the inspector at the residence.

The inspector will be at the address promptly or a few minutes before the scheduled time. If no one appears for the appointment within 5-10 minutes after the scheduled time, we will consider this a "No Show" and the inspector will leave. In case of a "no-show," the inspection will need to be rescheduled for another date and time.

## What If The Detectors Fail The Test?

Should the smoke detectors fail for any reason, including improper installation, the corrections will need to be made and a new inspection scheduled. To do this, contact the Cathedral City Fire Department and explain that a reschedule is required.

## Is There A Fee For An Inspection?

A fee will be levied for each inspection and re-inspection. After the inspector completes the inspection, the approved smoke detector inspection forms (gold and pink) will be left with the person who meets the inspector at the property. It is up to that person to get the form to the escrow company so that escrow may close. The completed smoke detector inspection is valid for six months from the date of the approved inspection. If the property is transferred within the 6-month time frame and unoccupied, another smoke detector inspection will not be required.

**The fee for an inspection is \$36.00, and is assessed each time a visit is made by the inspector.**

The fee is based upon the number of inspection visits necessary to gain compliance. The fee is applied per visit without regard to the number of smoke detectors in the single family residence.

## How Are Inspection Fees Collected?

The fee is charged to the seller of the home, and must be paid at the time of inspection. Cash or checks are acceptable, as well as credit/debit cards. To pay with credit/debit card, please call the Fire Department prior to inspection and be prepared to provide card information.

## What Paperwork Will I Need For My Escrow To Close?

The realtor/seller will receive two forms (gold and pink) of the approved inspection. These forms are to be retained by the escrow office in the escrow file. If there is no escrow, these forms are given to the person who requested the inspection.

## What Causes A Smoke Detector To Fail?

Poor maintenance, dead batteries, electronic failure, and some simply wear-out; electronic devices such as smoke detectors are affected by pollutants, dust and grease. In order to avoid having to call for a re-inspection, smoke detectors should be checked by the realtor/seller prior to the inspector's arrival. If a smoke detector is not working, try to replace the batteries or use the hose attachment of your vacuum cleaner to vacuum out the dust. If the smoke detector is wired into the household electrical system and is not working, you can call an electrician to fix or replace the hard wired smoke detector. A battery operated smoke detector is acceptable as well.

### FAILURE RATES

Age of Detector	Failure Rate
1 Year	1.70 – 3.40%
10 Years	16.10 – 40.00%
12 Years	29.16 -50.40%

It has been 15 – 30 years since the first smoke detectors were installed in the United States. We can expect 16% to 40% of these smoke detectors to have failed already, allowing 4 out of 10 residential fires to go undetected in the coming year. In addition, experts say that the entire smoke alarm should be replaced every 10 years to be safe.

## Where Can I Find More Information?

The Fire Prevention Division of the Cathedral City Fire Department is located at

32-100 Desert Vista Road  
Cathedral City, CA 92234  
Phone (760) 770-8200, FAX (760) 328-3902

The fire prevention office is open Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Fire Department encourages all inquiries or suggestions on how we can better serve you. Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

DUAL SENSOR



For more information about smoke detectors, visit these websites:

[www.firexsafety.com](http://www.firexsafety.com)

[www.firstalert.com](http://www.firstalert.com)

<http://www.kiddeus.com>

# What You Should Know Before You Sell, Refinance Or Transfer Title Of A Home....



# SMOKE DETECTOR & SAFETY INSPECTION PROGRAM