



**City of Milpitas  
Building And Safety Division**

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**Smoke alarms in residential  
remodels**

Policy: BDP-BLG19

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Last Revised

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Proposed By: TUCC

**CODE REFERENCES:**

**CBC Sections 907.2.10.1, 907.2.10.5.2, 907.2.10.3 and 907.2.10.5, 2006 IRC Section R313.2.1**

**ISSUE:**

CBC Section 907.2.10.2 requires hard-wired smoke alarms in new construction. CBC 907.2.10.3 requires smoke alarms to be interconnected when they are required to be installed in Group R-3 occupancies. This may present a problem in existing dwellings where additions and alterations will be constructed.

CBC Section 907.2.10.5 addresses existing structures housing Group R-3 occupancies prior to January 1, 2008. The intent of this section is that every existing R-3 occupancy need not mandatory comply with the requirements for new construction. This section allows for reasonable judgment in application of the requirements by the enforcing agency. Options suggested by this section include additional means of egress, installation of automatic sprinkler systems, automatic fire alarm system or other life safety measures. CBC Section 907.2.10.5.2 restates Health and Safety Code Section 13113.7 and allows battery operated smoke detectors in existing dwelling units.

2006 IRC Section R313.2.1 provides requirements for smoke alarms in dwellings where alterations, repairs and additions occur. This section states that the smoke alarms shall be interconnected and hard wired. However, this section also provides the following exceptions:

1. Interconnection and hard-wiring of smoke alarms in existing areas shall not be required where the alterations or repairs do not result in the removal of interior wall or ceiling finishes exposing the structure, unless there is an attic, crawl space or basement available which could provide access for hard wiring and interconnection without the removal of interior finishes.
2. This exception exempts projects consisting of work that is solely to the exterior surface of the dwelling.

**POLICY:**

The power source and interconnection requirements of smoke alarms shall be met when there is construction of new bedroom additions or remodels of dwellings to add bedrooms where none previously existed.

Interconnection and hard wiring of smoke alarms in existing areas shall not be required where the alterations or repairs do not result in construction of new bedrooms where none previously existed.

Smoke alarms not adjacent to the permitted area of work may be battery-operated.

Where more than one new hardwired smoke alarm is required per CBC 907.2.10.1.2, then they must be interconnected to each other in accordance with CBC 907.2.10.3.