
HOUSE BILL 2401

State of Washington 63rd Legislature 2014 Regular Session

By Representatives Takko, Johnson, Fitzgibbon, Ryu, Van De Wege, and Tarleton

Read first time 01/16/14. Referred to Committee on Local Government.

1 AN ACT Relating to promoting fire safety with long-life smoke
2 detection devices; adding new sections to chapter 43.44 RCW; and
3 creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature recognizes that the lack
6 of properly working smoke alarms poses a serious threat. National fire
7 protection association statistics indicate that ninety-four percent of
8 households in the United States have smoke detectors, but thirty
9 percent of those alarms are inoperable. The death rate per one hundred
10 reported fires is twice as high in homes without working smoke alarms
11 as it is in home fires with protection. Further, two-thirds of all
12 home fire deaths occur in residences with no smoke alarm or no working
13 smoke alarm, primarily due to dead or missing batteries. The
14 legislature finds that smoke alarms with nonremovable, nonreplaceable
15 batteries eliminate the need to replace the battery, something many
16 homeowners fail to do.

17 (2) The average time to escape in a residential fire is about three
18 minutes. A working alarm that can give advance warning to alert

1 residents of a fire incident is important to reduce fatality and injury
2 of both residents and firefighters and allow firefighters to more
3 rapidly control the fire.

4 (3) In one recent incident in the Auburn area, an eight-unit
5 apartment burned and all eight smoke alarms were inoperable. A
6 December 2013 Bellingham fire in a home that contained a smoke alarm
7 with no battery took the life of nineteen year old Adam LaVine. It is
8 the intent of the legislature to prevent similar tragedies from
9 happening in the future.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.44 RCW
11 to read as follows:

12 (1) Commencing July 1, 2016, all smoke alarms that are solely
13 battery powered, including combination smoke alarms offered for retail
14 sale in this state for the purpose of installation in residential
15 buildings, must contain a nonreplaceable, nonremovable battery capable
16 of powering the smoke alarm for a minimum of ten years.

17 (2) Commencing July 1, 2016, all smoke alarms or combination smoke
18 alarms must:

19 (a) Display the date of manufacture;

20 (b) Provide a place on the device where the date of installation
21 can be written. The date of installation must be visible to the
22 consumer without removing the alarm from its base or mounting bracket;
23 and

24 (c) Incorporate a hush feature.

25 (3) Subsections (1) and (2) of this section do not apply to:

26 (a) Smoke detectors intended to be used with a fire alarm or
27 household fire alarm control unit;

28 (b) Smoke alarms that send a supervision and battery depletion
29 signal to a fire alarm or household fire alarm control unit via a
30 low-power wireless communication signal;

31 (c) Smoke alarms that use low-power radio frequency wireless
32 communication signal for interconnection;

33 (d) Smoke alarms that use a low-frequency audible alarm used by the
34 hearing impaired or elderly that enhance waking effectiveness;

35 (e) Smoke alarms with multisensing technologies; or

36 (f) If a retailer can show proof that a product prohibited for sale

1 under this section was in stock and physically in the retail location
2 before the effective date of this section, that retail location may
3 sell that product until it is sold out, or until July 1, 2016.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.44 RCW
5 to read as follows:

6 (1) The state building code council shall update codes in all
7 necessary and relevant sections regarding solely battery powered smoke
8 alarms in all existing occupancies to be consistent with this section
9 and section 2 of this act in the next code cycle.

10 (2) In all existing occupancies, smoke alarms must be upgraded to
11 comply with this section and section 2 of this act when any of the
12 following occurs:

13 (a) The existing smoke alarm exceeds ten years from the date of
14 manufacture;

15 (b) The existing smoke alarm fails to respond to operability tests
16 or otherwise malfunctions; or

17 (c) There is a change of ownership or a change of tenant in the
18 residential unit and the residential unit has not previously been
19 equipped in accordance with smoke alarms that are compliant with
20 section 2 of this act within the ten years preceding the change of
21 ownership or change of tenant.

22 (3) A landlord may require reimbursement from a tenant for the cost
23 of a smoke alarm required under section 2 of this act.

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