

# Building Control Guidance Leaflet 6

## Smoke detectors in dwellings



### Environmental Services Department

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#### Smoke detectors

A substantial number of people die and others are injured in domestic fires every year, many from smoke inhalation. It is widely accepted that those deaths and injuries would be significantly reduced by installing and maintaining smoke alarms within dwellings.

#### Buying a smoke alarm

When buying a smoke alarm make sure it complies with a British Standard or the International Standard Organisation (ISO) standard. Self-contained smoke alarms must comply with BS 5446 Part 1 1990 for automatic fire detection, and with BS 5839 Part 1 2002 for an alarm system. Look for the BS kitemark or the CE mark with the standards displayed. Never buy a second-hand smoke detector.

#### Where are self-contained smoke alarm systems required?

In all new dwellings, flats and extensions or alterations to dwellings or flats where the installation of smoke alarms was a condition of the original approval.

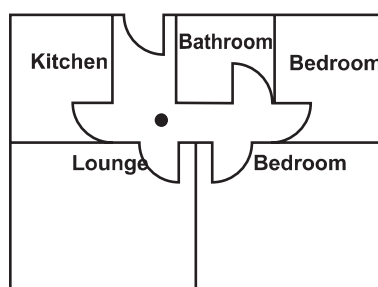
Please note: In all new dwellings the smoke alarms must be permanently wired to an electric circuit which is fused separately at the distribution board or on a lighting circuit.

It is recommended that smoke detectors have a rechargeable battery backup and that the installation of a smoke detector is done by a qualified person, for example, a registered electrician.

Self-contained smoke alarms are not recommended for use in areas such as kitchens or garages, for example, places where steam, condensation or fumes could cause false alarms. More appropriate and effective detectors are available for such instances, for example, heat detectors.

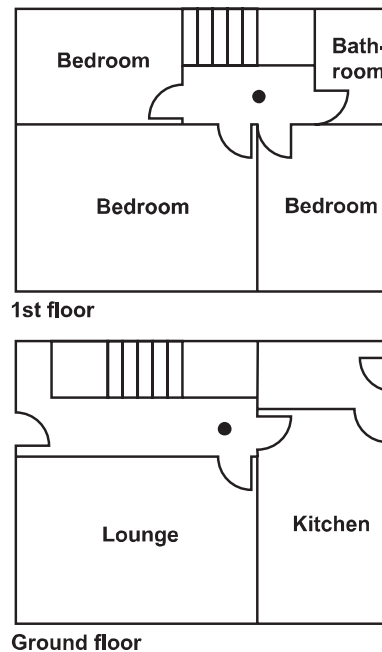
#### Location of smoke alarms

Figure 1



A high standard of protection can be provided by installing detectors in the kitchen and lounge areas. In a single storey 2 or 3 bedroom dwelling, a single smoke detector may be adequate if sited in the main circulation area, see figure 1. In a typical two storey dwelling smoke detectors should be installed at both ground and upper levels within 7.5m of the door to every habitable room. Therefore, at least two smoke alarms will be required, see figure 2.

**Figure 2**



### **Maintenance**

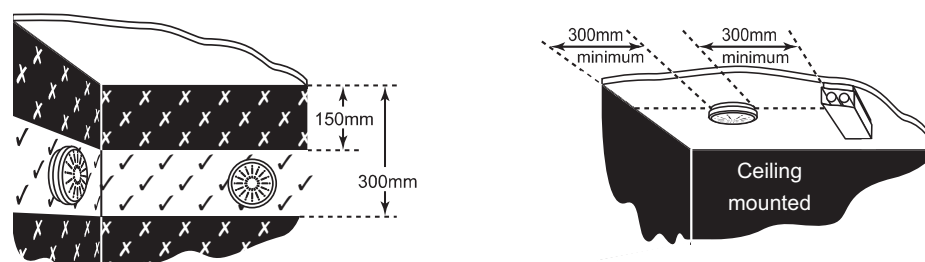
We have no authority to make sure that smoke alarms are maintained. It is vitally important that your smoke alarm is regularly checked in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

### **Positioning**

Smoke alarms should be located in a circulation route such as the hall or landing, so that there is one:

- not more than 7.5m from every bedroom door
- not more than 7.5m from every door of a living room or kitchen
- every 15m in a circulation route, such as a corridor.

They should be positioned as below.



Do not position above a heater. Access must be easy and safe for maintenance purposes.

## **Building Control**

You are reminded that Building Regulations approval does not imply approval under the Town and Country Planning Act. You should always check whether or not a planning application is required.

This leaflet provides advice on a particular aspect of the Building Regulations. It is not a statement of law, but is intended to help you to understand the system.

Building Regulations are changed from time to time. If you did not receive this leaflet directly from Wigan Council's Environmental Services Department, you must check that the information is still current.

We are here to help. If you are in any doubt over the requirements of the Building Regulations, or if you need further information, please telephone or visit our office. Our details are:

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