



Smoke Alarm Solutions
PROTECTING AUSTRALIANS

Position Statement

Ionisation and Photoelectric Smoke Alarms

Smoke Alarm Solutions Pty Ltd ABN 97 604 793 688
Email info@smokealarmsolutions.com.au Fax 1300 852 302

**Brisbane/Gold Coast/
Sunshine Coast**

1300 852 301

Rockhampton/Emerald

1300 853 694

Gladstone

1300 853 695

Mackay

1300 853 802

Townsville

1300 853 801

Cairns

1300 853 925

New South Wales 1300 853 910

Victoria 1300 853 909

South Australia 1300 853 924



Position Statement on Ionisation and Photoelectric Smoke Alarms

September 2014

There are two types of smoke alarms - Photoelectric (also known as optical) and Ionisation. The alarms work in different ways to detect smoke. Both types are capable of meeting Australian Standard AS3786 and both types of alarms can be legally purchased and used in Australia.

Every State Fire Authority in Australia recommends the use of photoelectric smoke alarms, not ionisation smoke alarms. Recommendations from the Fire Authorities include:

Queensland Fire & Rescue Service

"Photoelectric smoke alarms are generally more effective than ionisation types across a wider range of fires experienced in homes. For this reason, QFRS recommends that photoelectric smoke alarms be installed, especially if you are installing only one alarm."

Fire & Rescue NSW

"To maximise the opportunity for early warning in all fire scenarios, the FRNSW recommends the installation of photoelectric alarms, hard wired and interconnected, in all residential accommodation. If only installing one alarm, it should be a photoelectric alarm."

South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service

"The MFS recommends that the best protection is provided by photoelectric smoke alarms."

Metropolitan Fire Brigade Victoria

"All Fire Services in Australia recommend photoelectric smoke alarms when installing or replacing existing smoke alarms."

The Northern Territory Fire Service has legislated that only photoelectric smoke alarms can be installed - it is no longer legal to install ionisation smoke alarms in the Northern Territory.

Smoke Alarm Solutions fully supports the views of the Fire Authorities, and we only install photoelectric smoke alarms.

If we visit a property and the existing smoke alarm requires replacement, we replace the alarm with a photoelectric alarm, even if the alarm we are replacing was an ionisation alarm. The inherent problems with ionisation alarms include:

- Not as effective as photoelectric smoke alarms in detecting the early, smouldering stage of fire
- Contain a small amount of radioactive material
- Prone to false alarms resulting in people removing the battery and therefore having no protection at all. Statistics show that over 25% of ionisation alarms are disconnected after two years.

Smoke Alarm Solutions Pty Ltd ABN 97 604 793 688
Email info@smokealarmsolutions.com.au Fax 1300 852 302

Brisbane/Gold Coast/
Sunshine Coast
Rockhampton/Emerald
Gladstone

1300 852 301
1300 853 694
1300 853 695

Mackay
Townsville
Cairns

1300 853 802
1300 853 801
1300 853 925

New South Wales 1300 853 910
Victoria 1300 853 909
South Australia 1300 853 924



We have conducted more than 1.5 million smoke alarm inspections, and we have first-hand experience in the potential dangers of ionisation smoke alarms not responding to a real fire situation. During the last 7 years we have attended a significant number of properties where the occupant has reported a fire, with the house full of smoke, and the alarms did not respond. In every single case, the alarms that did not respond were ionisation smoke alarms. We service the smoke alarms in more than 200,000 properties, and we attend more than 100 properties every day where the occupant has reported a beeping, faulty or false-alarming smoke alarm. In 87% of these fault reports, the alarms are ionisation smoke alarms.

We take our responsibilities of protecting the occupants of homes that we service very seriously, and for this reason, and based on our real-world experience with ionisation smoke alarms, we only install photoelectric smoke alarms.

Properties we service for you

All smoke alarms that we install or replace are photoelectric smoke alarms. All smoke alarms have a service life of 10 years, and then must be replaced. This means that every single property that we service will have photoelectric smoke alarms (that are required for compliance) within 10 years of us commencing service at that property. If a property you manage has ionisation smoke alarms, you do not legally need to do anything or change them to photoelectric - but they do not provide the highest level of protection to the occupants. Smoke Alarm Solutions feels so strongly about the need for photoelectric smoke alarms that we offer a heavily discounted price to change over ionisation smoke alarms to photoelectric. If you wish to change an ionisation smoke alarm to photoelectric prior to its expiration date, please contact us on 1300 852 301 or email us at info@smokealarmsolutions.com.au to arrange.

Further information

There is worldwide effort to ban ionisation smoke alarms, and many US States have already outlawed the use of ionisation smoke alarms. The Northern Territory has already made the use of ionisation smoke alarms illegal, and all States strongly recommend photoelectric smoke alarms. Smoke Alarm Solutions support any and every effort to outlaw ionisation smoke alarms. For more detailed information about the dangers of ionisation smoke alarms and to see the efforts being made to protect people from dying needlessly in house fires, please visit www.theworldfiresafetyfoundation.org.

Smoke Alarm Solutions Pty Ltd ABN 97 604 793 688
Email info@smokealarmsolutions.com.au Fax 1300 852 302

Brisbane/Gold Coast/
Sunshine Coast
Rockhampton/Emerald
Gladstone

1300 852 301
1300 853 694
1300 853 695

Mackay
Townsville
Cairns

1300 853 802
1300 853 801
1300 853 925

New South Wales 1300 853 910
Victoria 1300 853 909
South Australia 1300 853 924