

**EXPRESS TERMS  
FOR  
FINAL EMERGENCY BUILDING STANDARDS  
OF THE  
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL  
REGARDING THE 2010 CALIFORNIA FIRE CODE  
CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 24, PART 9  
SMOKE ALARM POWER SOURCE / INTERCONNECTION REQUIREMENTS  
FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS**

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The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) proposes to make necessary changes to the 2010 edition of the California Fire Code relating to smoke alarms and exemptions for alterations, repairs and exterior work.

**Legend for Express Terms:**

1. California amendments brought forward without modification: Not shown for clarity
  2. New California amendment: *California language appears underlined and in Italics.*
  3. Repealed text: Shown as ~~Strikeout~~.
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[The SFM proposes to amend Chapter 46 with the following amendments and California regulations.]

**CHAPTER 46  
CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS**

**4603.7.2 Interconnection.** Where more than one smoke alarm is required to be installed within an individual *dwelling* or *sleeping unit*, the smoke alarms shall be interconnected in such a manner that the activation of one alarm will activate all of the alarms in the individual unit. The alarm shall be clearly audible in all bedrooms over background noise levels with all intervening doors closed.

**Exceptions:**

1. Interconnection is not required in buildings that are not undergoing *alterations*, repairs or construction of any kind.
2. Smoke alarms in existing areas are not required to be interconnected where *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 interconnection without the removal of interior finishes.
3. *Smoke alarms are not required to be interconnected where repairs or alterations are limited to the exterior surfaces of dwellings, such as the replacement of roofing or siding, or the addition or replacement of windows or doors, or the addition of a porch or deck.*
4. *Smoke alarms are not required to be interconnected when work is limited to the installation, alteration or repairs of plumbing or mechanical systems or the installation, alteration or repair of electrical systems which do not result in the removal of interior wall or ceiling finishes exposing the structure.*

**4603.7.3 Power source.** Single-station smoke alarms shall receive their primary power from the building wiring provided that such wiring is served from a commercial source and shall be equipped with a battery backup. Smoke alarms with integral strobes that are not equipped with battery backup shall be connected to an emergency electrical system. Smoke alarms shall emit a signal when the batteries are low. Wiring shall be permanent and without a disconnecting switch other than as required for overcurrent protection.

**Exceptions:**

1. Smoke alarms are permitted to be solely battery operated in existing buildings where no construction is taking place.
2. Smoke alarms are permitted to be solely battery operated in buildings that are not served from a commercial power source.
3. Smoke alarms are permitted to be solely battery operated in existing areas of buildings undergoing alterations or repairs that do not result in the removal of interior walls or ceiling finishes exposing the structure, unless there is an attic, crawl space or *basement* available which could provide access for building wiring without the removal of interior finishes.
4. Smoke alarms are permitted to be solely battery operated where repairs or alterations are limited to the exterior surfaces of dwellings, such as the replacement of roofing or siding, or the addition or replacement of windows or doors, or the addition of a porch or deck.
5. Smoke alarms are permitted to be solely battery operated when work is limited to the installation, alteration or repairs of plumbing or mechanical systems or the installation, alteration or repair of electrical systems which do not result in the removal of interior wall or ceiling finishes exposing the structure.

#### **4603.7.5 Additional provisions for existing Group ~~R-3R~~ occupancies.**

**4603.7.5.1** Existing Buildings housing Group ~~R-3R~~ Occupancies established prior to the effective date of these regulations may have their use continued if they conform or are made to conform to provisions of these regulations to the extent that reasonable and adequate life safety against the hazards of fire, panic and explosion is substantially provided. Additional means of egress, the installation of automatic sprinkler systems, automatic fire alarm system or other life safety measures, may be required to provide reasonable and adequate safety.

**Note:** It is the intent of this sections that every existing occupancy need not mandatorily conform with the requirements for new construction. Reasonable judgment in the application of requirements must be exercised by the enforcing agency.

#### **Notation:**

Authority: Health and Safety Code Sections 13100.1, 13108, 13113.7, 13113.8, 13114, 13143, 17921(b), 18928(a), and 18949.2(b) and (c)

Reference: Health and Safety Code Sections 13108, 13113.7, 13113.8, 13114, 17921(b) and 18949.2(b) and (c)