

481—280.15(10A) Scope, definitions, and requirements for smoke alarms and smoke detectors.

280.15(1) This rule applies to single-family and two-family residences, townhouses, and all other residential occupancies in commercial buildings unless otherwise provided herein or by another provision of law. This rule does not apply to nonresidential occupancies.

280.15(2) For purposes of this rule, the following definition applies:

“Approved” means that the equipment has been approved by the department or listed for a specific use by an independent testing laboratory or organization of national reputation.

280.15(3) Residential smoke alarms are required to be listed under UL 217 edition 8 or 9. Approved single-station smoke alarms are acceptable in all areas covered by this chapter unless other fire warning equipment or materials are required by any provision of rules 481—280.8(10A) through 481—280.10(10A), rules 481—280.12(10A) and 481—280.13(10A,135C), or rule 481—280.14(10A) or if a fire alarm system with smoke detection listed under UL 268 edition 8-2023 has been installed. Any single-station smoke alarm or multiple-station smoke alarm installed on or after April 1, 2010, in compliance with this subrule, including a replacement of an existing smoke alarm, shall be listed under UL 217 edition 8 or 9.

280.15(4) All devices, combinations of devices, and equipment to be installed in conformity with this chapter shall be approved and used for the purposes for which they are intended and installed in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations. Any devices, combinations of devices, and equipment installed on or after April 1, 2010, in compliance with this chapter, including a replacement of an existing smoke alarm, will be listed in accordance with UL 217 edition 8 or 9. Existing dual sensor smoke alarms may be maintained until replacement is recommended by the manufacturer or upon failure.

280.15(5) A combination system, such as a household fire warning system whose components may be used in whole or in part, in common with a non-fire emergency signaling system, such as a burglar alarm system or an intercom system, is not permitted or approved, except for one- or two-family dwellings.

280.15(6) Single-station battery-operated or battery backup smoke alarms shall be replaced in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.

280.15(7) Power supplies shall be sufficient to operate the smoke detector alarm for at least four continuous minutes. Additionally:

a. In new buildings and additions constructed after July 1, 1991, required smoke alarms will receive their primary power from the building wiring when such wiring is served from a commercial source. Wiring will be permanent and without a disconnecting switch other than that required for overcurrent protection. Smoke alarms may be solely battery-powered when installed in existing buildings; in buildings without commercial power; or in buildings presently undergoing alterations, repairs, or additions subject to 481—Chapter 404.

b. New and replacement smoke alarms installed after May 1, 1993, that receive their primary power from the building wiring will be equipped with a battery backup.

c. New and replacement smoke alarms installed after July 1, 2016, that receive their primary power from the building wiring where more than one smoke alarm is required to be installed will be interconnected in such a manner that the activation of one alarm will activate all of the alarms.

d. After June 30, 2021, a battery-powered smoke alarm listed in accordance with UL 217 edition 8 that is newly installed or replaces an existing battery-powered smoke alarm must be powered by a nonremovable, nonreplaceable battery that powers the alarm for at least ten years. The battery requirements of this subrule do not apply to a fire alarm, smoke detector, smoke alarm, or ancillary component that is electronically connected as a part of a centrally monitored or supervised alarm system or that uses a low-power, radio frequency wireless communication signal.

280.15(8) The failure of any nonreliable or short-life component that renders the alarm inoperative shall be readily apparent to the occupant of the sleeping unit without the need for a test. Each smoke alarm shall detect abnormal quantities of smoke and properly operate under normal environmental conditions.

280.15(9) Installed fire warning equipment shall be mounted so as to be supported independently of its attachment to wires.

280.15(10) All apparatus shall be restored to normal immediately after each alarm or test.

280.15(11) Smoke alarms shall be located on the ceiling or wall outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of bedrooms; in each room used for sleeping purposes; and in each story within a dwelling unit, including basements but not including crawl spaces and uninhabitable attics. In dwellings or dwelling units with split levels and without an intervening door between the adjacent levels, a smoke alarm installed on the upper level suffices for the adjacent lower level, provided that the lower level is less than one full story below the upper level.

280.15(12) A person who files for a homestead tax credit pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 425 shall certify that the single-family dwelling unit for which the credit is filed has a smoke alarm(s) installed in accordance with subrules 280.15(6) and 280.15(11) or that such smoke alarm(s) will be installed within 30 days of the date of filing for credit.

280.15(13) All multiple-unit residential buildings and single-family dwellings that are constructed after July 1, 1991, shall include the installation of smoke alarms meeting the requirements of this rule. All existing single-family units and multiple-unit residential buildings shall be equipped with smoke alarms or detectors as required in subrule 280.15(11).

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