

## **HQS Advisory Smoke Detectors**

### **What we are looking for?**

There must be a working smoke detection device on each level of the house in halls or adjacent sleeping areas. The housing inspectors are checking to see if the smoke detectors (also known as smoke alarms) that are currently installed in your unit are working properly. Generally, the inspector will press the test button on each detector to see if the alarm sounds. If it does not sound the inspector may cite the unit as a failure.

### **Will the inspector require that new or additional smoke detectors be installed?**

HUD regulations require that Housing Quality Standards (HQS) reflect local fire safety laws and ordinances. Within the City of Bellingham, smoke detectors are required in all bedrooms for rental units (Ordinance 1998-07-054). In the remainder of the BHA's jurisdiction, the inspector will include a comment in the inspection notice that the rental unit may not meet current local or state requirements and that smoke detectors must be installed in all bedrooms before the next annual inspection. The inspector may also require reinstallation of smoke detectors if the unit contains older smoke detection units that do not have a test button or if previously installed smoke detector units have been removed from the residence.

### **Who is responsible for the installation and maintenance?**

The revised Code of Washington (RCW) 48.48.140 paragraphs 3 and 4 state: (3) Installation of smoke detection devices shall be the responsibility of the owner. Maintenance of the smoke detection devices, including the replacement of batteries where required for the proper operation of the smoke detection device, shall be the responsibility of the tenant, who shall maintain the device as specified by the manufacturer and, (4) *Any owner or tenant failing to comply with this section shall be punished by fine of not more than two hundred dollars.*

Local ordinances and property rules and regulations may require that owners provide batteries and otherwise maintain the units. Tenants advised to check with their landlord regarding maintenance policies.

RCW 59.18.130 paragraph Duties of the tenant paragraph 7 reads: [The tenant shall] maintain the smoke detection device in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations, including the replacement of batteries where required for the proper operation of the smoke detection device, as required in RCW 48.48.140(3).

***Due to the inevitable accumulation of dust and other contaminants, it is strongly recommended that owners replace all smoke detection devices every tens years.***

**How long do I have to fix the failed smoke detector?**

If there are no functional smoke detectors in the residential unit then repairs must be made within 24-hours. If a smoke detector is missing or inoperative but there are other functional units within residence then the inspectors may allow up to 10 calendar days to make the necessary repairs.