

Top Stories

## Worrying new data as smoke alarm law changes loom

Worrying new data shows just how far behind Queensland rental properties are with just six weeks until new smoke alarm laws kick in.



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The Sunday Mail (Qld)

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Nov 21, 2021 12:00am



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Over half of Queensland's rental properties are still not compliant with new smoke alarm laws set to come into effect in just over a month.

From January 1, residential rental properties will be required to have interconnected, photoelectric smoke alarms installed in every bedroom, in hallways and on every level.

The changes came after a scathing coronial inquest into Australia's deadliest house fire – a 2011 inferno at Logan which claimed 11 lives after a smoke alarm was turned off because it was too noisy.

Alarms must now be hardwired or be powered by non-removable 10-year lithium batteries.

If one alarm is triggered, all of them are to go off.

Failure to comply will result in initial warnings and eventually fines.

However, just weeks out from the new mandate taking effect, disturbing research from property software analysts Console has revealed only 43 per cent of houses and 39.3 per cent of residential units were compliant with the requirements.

#### BEST & WORST QLD REGIONS FOR COMPLIANCE



#### **MOST COMPLIANT**

1. Strathpine: 64.58%
2. North Lakes: 61.79%
3. Beaudesert: 60.47%
4. Port Douglas / Daintree: 59.75%
5. Capalaba: 59.02%
6. Rockhampton: 58.06%
7. Ipswich Hinterland: 57.50%
8. Springfield / Redbank: 57.30%
9. Narangba / Burpengary: 57.09%
10. Toowoomba: 55.25%

#### **LEAST COMPLIANT**

1. Townsville: 11.81%
2. Bowen Basin (North): 12.14%
3. Central Highlands: 13.29%
4. Mackay: 13.95%
5. Darling Downs (East): 23.88%
6. Gladstone / Biloela: 25.02%
7. Tablelands (East) – Kuranda: 26%
8. Granite Belt: 26.19%
9. Nambour / Pomona: 26.98%
10. Brisbane – Inner North: 28.51%

Console chief operating officer Matt McGown said the race was on for property managers and landlords to ensure their rentals adhere to the new laws.

“Our Console Cloud data shows a lack of compliant smoke alarms is particularly a problem in regional Queensland, with north and central Queensland districts recording the lowest percentage of compliant properties,” he said.

“With tens of thousands of properties needing the new smoke alarm systems to be installed, property managers and landlords

will be under a lot of pressure to meet the impending deadline.

“Considering hardwired smoke alarms must be installed by a licensed electrician – the time to install smoke alarms is rapidly running out.”

Police Minister Mark Ryan said property owners had been given ample notice about the changes.

“This is about saving lives, this about keeping people safe in their homes,” he said.

“Property owners have had five years notice that these regulations were coming into effect.

“Compared to the value of a human life, and even to the value of a property, the installation of interconnected smoke alarms is a relatively small investment.”

In a statement, a spokesman for the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service said

“Extensive community education is ongoing and QFES is confident that Queenslanders recognise that smoke alarms save lives,” the statement said.

The spokesman said QFES data suggested 94 per cent of rental properties would be compliant by year’s end.

Albany Creek renter Caroline Mathers said she was glad her home already had the new system of smoke alarms.



Caroline Mathers is relieved her home already has the new smoke alarms. Picture: Jamie Hanson

“Having two boys it’s something that’s really important,” she said.

“I also run my business Connect Search and Selection from home, so it’s good to have that extra layer of protection.”

Rental properties with existing leasing agreements will be required to make the change before renewing a lease, while every home in the state, rental or owner-occupier, will be required to install the new smoke alarm system by 2027.

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