



**Fire Prevention Director
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BUYER – SMOKE DETECTOR GUIDELINES FOR SELF INSPECTION

Given the recent information of State Executive Order regarding inspections of home sales, it appears that the seller has the option to work with the buyer and arrangements made for the buyer to be responsible for smoke detector CO requirements. I understand that this is an executive order to assist in sheltering. The Fire Prevention office wishes to work with the Governors order but we also are concerned the buyer may be left on the hook long after the sale is done. Guidance and education, on our part, will be needed on real estate sales backlog to provide these inspections to the buyers, but my primary concern is to give the buyer/real estate agent some tips that may help them understand your own compliance in the sale of the property. This way the buyer may have some assurance knowing what they need or may need. Buying a home should be an exciting thing and we want the buyers to be happy but also SAFE in their decisions to live in Fitchburg and raise their families.

First of all: Please check the Fitchburg FD Web-site as we provide guidance by house design. This covers placements as well,
www.ci.fitchburg.ma.us/203

Single family – requirements by year of build or modification

2-5 Family – Requirements by year of build or modification

6-12 Family – Requirements by year (including Fire Alarm System)

13 family and up – Requirements by year (including answering point)

Second: Please check the City of Fitchburg Property lookup - Web-site.
<https://www.axisgis.com/fitchburgma/>

Type in the information of the property – Leave out St & Rd as the site is very specific

(Click) on the property listing – the pop up window will appear –

(Click) Documents and links to the CAI property card. This is the vital information you need. Print if you can.

**** Please see Next Page for Smoke Detector Thresholds and concerns to Print and take with you****
It's not perfect but a quick guide to make better decisions. Placement is always tough in some cases.

From the Fire Prevention office to your homes, please pay closer attention to your own smoke alarms and carbon monoxide devices. Maintain them with battery changes and test them for good working order. People are going to be spending a lot more time in their homes and we wish them to be protected and safe. The Fire Prevention office is currently maintaining their phone lines and we are returning calls ASAP if we away from the desk.

Our blessings to all of you as we get through this needed measure of control to reduce the impact of this illness.

Lt. Philip Jordan – Fire Prevention Bureau

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Unique to Fitchburg

The Thresholds to watch:

- All single family homes are inter-connected hard wire – Photo or Photo/CO
- CO detectors are hard-wired only after 2011 but Combination devices are recommended for entire building notification.
- Apartment building pre 1975 – The interior apartment detectors do NOT have to be inter-connected but it is recommended.
- In Multifamily units - Interior *common hallways*- that offer egress from more than 1 unit are interconnected throughout ALL the common hallways and the basement in most cases. (Quick tip) If you test the smoke/CO in the basement, then all other alarms in every exit hallway outside the apartments should alarm on every floor. Remember these are the interior hallways and NOT inside the units in most cases.
- All 6 family units trigger a Fire alarm system since 1989 – Ma Chapter 148 State Law
- All buildings with vacancy for more than two years – Can be challenging (especially 3 Family and up with sprinkler system requirements)

Buyer concerns to watch:

- Any property sold since 2015 (Fire Code Change) and has been inspected previously is a very good chance of being perfect.
- Any property sold from 1983 - 2015 (Fire Code Change) and has been inspected previously is a very good chance of being OK but check age of smoke detectors within 10 years. As you have the detector down check for the wires (Fitchburg has a hard-wire requirement) since 1982. Check the Type of detector to make sure it's **photoelectric**. Ionization detectors have been out of compliance since 2015 in both Fire and Building Code. If the back label states RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS as a warning, it is an ionization detector and it CANNOT be approved.
- Any property sold from 1975 – 1982 has a good chance of being OK but MAY need be hard-wired detectors. Please check the detectors for wires underneath.
- Any property with last sale date since before 1975 has a concerning chance of being OK but MAY have absolutely NO smoke detection at all or battery detectors.

Any house that sold for \$1 and did not incur any bank loan or a home last sold before 1983 are of higher scrutiny.

**** PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT WE ARE STILL DOING INSPECTIONS PER ORDER OF THE CHIEF – A Pre-inspection of a (vacant) Property for a Buyer can be done for \$25.00 which is our typical fee. It may offer some guidance and peace of mind but it is not required since the Governors Executive Order.**

We will answer the phones and return calls as we get them. Be patient with us as office staff is reduced.