



Home fire safety fact sheet

Smoke Alarm Disposal

Smoke alarms have a recommended service life of 10 years under normal operating conditions (Australian Standard 3786) after which time they should be replaced.

In the past, disposal of ionisation smoke alarms has presented a problem because they contain a minute particle of radioactive material. Ionisation type smoke alarms can be identified by the black and yellow radiation symbol which appears on the smoke alarm casing.

The Radiation Protection Division of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has reviewed the legislation in the light of best practice in Australia and internationally. In early 2009 it was made legal in South Australia to dispose of small quantities of domestic smoke alarms that contain radioactive material in domestic waste.

An exemption under the Act permits up to two domestic ionisation smoke alarms to be disposed into domestic waste during any period of seven days.

Prior to 2009 the Australian Standard for smoke alarms required smoke alarms that contained radioactive material to display a label advising that they should be disposed of by returning them to the supplier or the health department. Following the change in legislation in 2009 you can ignore this advice.

For more information go to <http://www.epa.sa.gov.au> and search for 'Smoke Alarm disposal'.

Old photo-electric smoke alarms (no radiation symbol) can be safely discarded with normal domestic rubbish.

