

SMOKE ALARM COMPLIANCE DEADLINE 2022 & METH TESTING – MORE ON THIS TOPIC

This month I had an opportunity to attend a seminar on these two topics and thought I would do a brief summary from my perspective as an investor and property owner.

1. **A Property that you own and live in:** -

There is no need to do anything at all about the smoke alarm compliance until it is time to sell the property. Then it will need to be compliant.

If you are never selling... no need to do anything other than maintain your current smoke alarms.

If you are renovating, and it is a **major** renovation then you will need to upgrade to be compliant to get your sign off from the building inspection process.

2. **A Property that is rented out:-**

There is no escaping this. It has to be done, and it will be expensive. Between \$169 to \$229 per alarm. If you have 3 bedrooms, you will need 4 alarms minimum, if you have two bedrooms you will need 3 alarms minimum. Two storey Villas may need an additional 1 -2 alarms. Average costs are between \$650 to \$850 per property. You will need to comply with the following:-

1. Smoke alarms must be installed in every bedroom
2. All smoke alarms must be powered by 240 volt or 10 year lithium battery
3. All smoke alarms must be interconnected to each other
4. All smoke alarms must be photoelectric
5. All smoke alarms must meet Australian Standard 3786:2014

3. **Photoelectric v's ionisation**

Previously there has been a choice. Ionisation is the type that falsely alarms more frequently. When you are burning the toast for example. Come 2022 you will only be able to have Photoelectric, but there are two types of photoelectric.

- A. 240volt hardwired or
 - B. 10 year lithium battery.
- You will not have a choice if you already have hardwired smoke alarms. Legislation requires them to be replaced with hardwired. Both types can speak to one another via blue tooth, so a combination of battery and hardwired is possible in one house or unit. Both are the same price to buy. Qualified technicians will need to set up the frequencies so that you are not competing or impeding close neighbours and their frequencies.

THE CHOICE TO MAKE IS TO DO IT NOW OR DO IT LATER.

There are several schools of thought. The units may become cheaper as more are required, or they may become more expensive as there is increased demand on the supply. There is a \$229 European brand or a Chinese brand at \$169. Both are compliant with Australian Standards.

A deal may be possible.....

Smoke Alarm Solutions will do a discounted rate if one owner has 3 or more properties. They won't let me as an agent negotiate a bulk rate for all the properties in my care, but there may be a way to get a discount on this.

Newstead Terraces

If the Body Corporate books the whole building in for an upgrade then we can talk discounts. The Body Corporate could then charge individual owners for the costs directly related to their units. This Deal is available if the upgrade is done this year, and would cover rented and owner occupied properties, and apply if all the properties in the complex proceeded at the same time.

If you think that this might appeal to you, then please let me know by email and I can then go to the committee with numbers of interested property owners to see if it might be a viable way to get the upgrades done to our smoke alarms.

METH TESTING

The statistics out of New Zealand are one in three rental properties have Meth contamination. Australia is one of the highest Meth using countries in the world. It will only be a matter of time before Meth Testing between tenancies will be treated the same way as smoke alarm compliance.

There are a few things to be aware of.

1. You can't meth test whilst you have a tenant in place unless the tenant themselves have requested it.
2. There serious health implications for young children and elderly living in meth contaminated homes.
3. Often it is neighbours that alerts current tenants to the likelihood of the property being Meth contaminated. It is impossible to detect during routine inspections. There is no odour or residue that can be immediately identified.
4. Online testing kits return false positives and false negatives and are unreliable.
5. 5 micrograms and over can harm an unborn foetus.
6. Initial testing is available at \$227 for a 10 swab kit. If Meth is detected there is a three phase clean up process.
7. It is necessary to have a base line, or starting point, to be able to pin the costs of the clean up on the outgoing tenant. That base line testing is \$274 each year.
8. Police are not interested in contamination, only in meth kitchens.
9. Terri Scheer insurance does cover meth decontamination. If you are not with Terri Scheer, I recommend you check with your insurance company to see if you are covered.

I have no suspicion of having any meth using residents in Newstead Terraces, or any reason to think that we should start doing Meth testing on our units at this point in time. I do believe we need to keep ourselves informed and ready.

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The AGL account has just arrived for January for the common areas at Newstead Terraces. You will be pleased to hear that our kWh consumption has dropped from 440 in July 18 to 380 in November and December 18, with a very slight increase in January 2019, so slight that I can't work out the difference on the chart that they provide. Our consumption has steadily dropped over last year.

Well done everyone. The invoice was still \$2437.64 for the month however, in comparison to Jan 18, \$2857.24, a \$389.90 saving approximately each month. Just shows the impact of those new light sensor LED lights. It is worth being diligent about replacing them when the opportunity arises.

RESIDENT PARKING IN VISITORS PARKING AREA AT NIGHT

It's time to take a look in the mirror and ask yourself could you be a little more conscientious about your use of the visitor's carpark? I have been taking photos at night of the full to the brim carpark and the cars that are in them. There are a few regulars in the visitor's carpark and more than a few residents.

Residents have designated car spaces to park in, visitors do not. If you are a resident, your car really should not be in the visitor's car park overnight. There is one car space available to rent in the complex on 4th March. If you need another spot, please come and see me about renting a space. Otherwise please park in your space. Be a considerate community member. Thank you.

SHOCKING FIND!

Whilst gardening on our Newstead Terrace Street gardens recently I found a yellow sharps container, empty, but beside it a bundle of needles still in their plastic covers and some used needles. This is the first time I have found anything like this over the 8 years I have been here. My message is beware.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW COMMITTEE

Welcome back to our hard working and dedicated executive, Chair Marion (u07) Secretary Kevin (12) and treasurer Peter (U45). We also welcome back Andrew F (U10) for another year as a general committee member and our new committee members Andrew M (U08), Allan R (U15) and Tony (U59). Our first meeting is March 7th, 6.00pm at the BBQ area.

A big vote of thanks to our outgoing members Jane (U41) whom has served on the committee for 8 years, Bruce (U60) for his tireless and diligent work on keeping next door compliant and responsible for any damage to our building during construction. We couldn't have done it without you Bruce., and Bob (U22) who kept a close eye on costs and Body Corporate by Law compliance for us all.

Keep Smiling!

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