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Public Law Chapter 551
“An Act to Amend the Law Pertaining to Smoke Detectors and Carbon Monoxide Detectors”

Effective March 25th, 2010

The following statements are designed to provide guidance with regard to Public Law Chapter 551.

Smoke Detectors

- Owners of a single-family dwelling built after January 1982, are to properly install smoke detectors, if not already present, in areas as designated in the manufacturers requirements.
- Owners of a single family dwelling in which a restoration or addition was made after September 19, 1985 must install smoke detectors, if they are not already present, even if it was built prior to 1982.
- Smoke detectors are to be installed in a building converted to a single-family occupancy after September 19, 1985 if they are not already present.
- A smoke detector installed within 20 feet of a bathroom or kitchen must be a photo electric type detector but smoke detectors in bedrooms may be ionization type detectors.
- Smoke detectors are to be installed in each unit of an apartment building.
- All rental units are to install smoke detectors. This includes single-family dwellings rented on a seasonal basis for a week, two weeks, a month, etc.
- In a rental unit, used as a primary residence (apartment) or seasonal rental of any duration of time, the owner must insure that the detectors are in place and operable at the beginning of the rental occupancy and make scheduled routine maintenance as befits the occupancy or upon the residents request.
- The purchaser of a single-family or multi-family dwelling(s) must certify that they shall properly install smoke detectors in the building, if not already present, within 30 days of acquisition or occupancy of the dwelling(s), whichever is later.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

- All rental units, including apartments and seasonally rented single-family dwellings are to install CO detectors in each area within, or giving access to, the bedrooms. This means you can put one in each bedroom or in the hallway or room in which a person travels through to reach a bedroom(s). *It is strongly recommended that no CO detector be placed in excess of 15 feet of any bedroom door.*
- At present, unless a single-family dwelling had done an addition or restoration to the dwelling adding one bedroom after September 12, 2009, or had converted another structure over to a single family dwelling after September 12, 2009, they do not have to install a carbon monoxide detector. *It is recommended that carbon monoxide detectors be installed in these occupancies.*
- The purchaser of a single-family or multi-family dwelling(s) must certify that they shall properly install carbon monoxide detectors in the building, if not already present, within 30 days of acquisition or occupancy of the dwelling(s), which ever is later. This includes single-family dwellings in which the previous owner did not have to, by law, install a carbon monoxide detector.
- Carbon monoxide detectors must be powered by the electrical service in the building by plugging them in a wall outlet or by having them hardwired in by an electrician. In either case, the detector must have a battery backup as an alternative source of power in the event the building loses electrical service.

These statements may not answer all your questions. On the next page you will find the language for PL 551 for your reference. Please feel free to contact the Fire Marshal's Office at 626-3873 if you have any further questions with regard to this new law. Thank you for helping make Maine a safer place.

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Amend the Law Pertaining to Smoke Detectors and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors clearly save lives and property and widespread use must be promoted; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 25 MRSA §2464, sub-§2, as repealed and replaced by PL 2009, c. 162, §1, is repealed.

Sec. 2. 25 MRSA §2464, sub-§2-A is enacted to read:

2-A. Smoke detectors required. The owner shall properly install, or cause to be properly installed, in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements at the time of installation, smoke detectors in:

A. A single-family dwelling the construction of which is completed after January 1, 1982;

B. Each unit in a building of multifamily occupancy;

C. An addition to or restoration of an existing single-family dwelling that adds at least one bedroom to the dwelling and the construction of which is completed after September 19, 1985; and

D. A conversion of a building to a single-family dwelling completed after September 19, 1985.

A smoke detector installed or replaced, after the effective date of this subsection, within 20 feet of a kitchen or of a bathroom containing a tub or shower must be a photoelectric-type smoke detector except that ionization detectors are permitted within the bedrooms even if the bedroom is within 20 feet of a kitchen or bathroom containing a tub or shower.

Sec. 3. 25 MRSA §2464, sub-§6, as amended by PL 2009, c. 162, §2, is further amended to read:

6. Liability. Nothing in this section gives rise to any action against an owner required to comply with subsection ~~22-A~~ or subsection 9, paragraph A if the owner has conducted an inspection of the required smoke detectors immediately after installation and has reinspected the smoke detectors prior

to occupancy by each new tenant, unless the owner has been given at least 24 hours' actual notice of a defect or failure of the smoke detector to operate properly and has failed to take action to correct the defect or failure.

Sec. 4. 25 MRSA §2464, sub-§9, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 162, §3, is amended to read:

9. Rental units. In ~~an apartment~~ a unit occupied under the terms of a rental agreement or under a month-to-month tenancy:

A. At the time of each occupancy, the landlord shall provide smoke detectors if they are not already present. The smoke detectors must be in working condition. After notification, in writing, of any deficiencies by the tenant, the landlord shall repair or replace the smoke detectors. If the landlord did not know and had not been notified of the need to repair or replace a smoke detector, the landlord's failure to repair or replace the smoke detector may not be considered as evidence of negligence in a subsequent civil action arising from death, property loss or personal injury; ~~and~~

B. The tenant shall keep the smoke detectors in working condition by keeping charged batteries in ~~battery-operated~~ the smoke detectors, by testing the smoke detectors periodically and by refraining from disabling the smoke detectors; and

C. The landlord may install 10-year sealed tamper-resistant battery-powered smoke detectors if the unit is a single-family dwelling.

Sec. 5. 25 MRSA §2464, sub-§10, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 162, §4, is amended to read:

10. Transfer of dwelling. A person who, after October 31, 2009, acquires by sale or exchange a single-family dwelling or a multiapartment building shall install smoke detectors in the acquired dwelling within 30 days of acquisition or occupancy of the dwelling, whichever is later, if smoke detectors are not already present, and shall certify at the closing of the transaction that the dwelling or multiapartment building is provided with smoke detectors in accordance with this section the purchaser will make the proper installation. This certification must be signed and dated by the purchaser. The smoke detectors must be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements at the time of installation. The smoke detectors must be powered by the electrical service in the building or by battery.

A person may not have a claim for relief against a property owner, a property purchaser, an authorized agent of a property owner or purchaser, a person in possession of real property ~~or a smoke detector installer~~, a closing agent or a lender for any damages resulting from the ~~proper~~ operation, maintenance or effectiveness of a smoke detector.

Violation of this subsection does not create a defect in title.

Sec. 6. 25 MRSA §2468, sub-§1, ¶B, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 162, §5, is amended to read:

B. "Electrical ~~Powered by the electrical~~ service" means ~~powered by a battery and either a device plugged into an electrical outlet or hardwired.~~

Sec. 7. 25 MRSA §2468, sub-§2, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 162, §5, is amended to read:

2. Carbon monoxide detectors required. The owner shall install, or cause to be installed, by the manufacturer's requirements at least one approved carbon monoxide detector in each area within, or giving access to, bedrooms in:

- A. Each apartment unit in any building of multifamily occupancy;
- B. Any addition to or restoration of an existing single-family dwelling that adds at least one bedroom to the dwelling unit; and
- C. Any conversion of a building to a single-family dwelling.

A carbon monoxide detector must be powered both by the electrical service in the building or dwelling and by battery.

Sec. 8. 25 MRSA §2468, sub-§4, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 162, §5, is amended to read:

4. New construction. A person who constructs a single-family dwelling shall install at least one carbon monoxide detector in each area within, or giving access to, any bedroom in the dwelling. The carbon monoxide detector must be powered both by the electrical service in the dwelling and by battery.

Sec. 9. 25 MRSA §2468, sub-§5, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 162, §5, is amended to read:

5. Rental units. In an apartment unit occupied under the terms of a rental agreement or under a month-to-month tenancy:

A. At the time of each occupancy, the landlord shall provide carbon monoxide detectors if carbon monoxide detectors are not already present. The carbon monoxide detectors must be in working condition. After notification, in writing, of any deficiencies by the tenant, the landlord shall repair or replace the carbon monoxide detectors. If the landlord did not know and had not been notified of the need to repair or replace a carbon monoxide detector, the landlord's failure to repair or replace the carbon monoxide detector may not be considered as evidence of negligence in a subsequent civil action arising from death, property loss or personal injury; and

B. The tenant shall keep the carbon monoxide detectors in working condition by keeping the carbon monoxide detectors connected to the electrical service in the building, by keeping charged batteries in ~~battery-operated~~ carbon monoxide detectors backed up by batteries, by testing the carbon monoxide detectors periodically and by refraining from disabling the carbon monoxide detectors.

Sec. 10. 25 MRSA §2468, sub-§6, as enacted by PL 2009, c. 162, §5, is amended to read:

6. Transfer of dwelling. A person who, after October 31, 2009, acquires by sale or exchange a single-family dwelling or a multiapartment building shall install carbon monoxide detectors in the acquired dwelling within 30 days of acquisition or occupancy of the dwelling, whichever is later, if carbon monoxide detectors are not already present, and shall certify at the closing of the transaction that the dwelling or multiapartment building is provided with carbon monoxide detectors in accordance with this section~~purchaser will make the proper installation.~~ This certification must be signed and dated by

the purchaser. The carbon monoxide detectors must be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements at the time of installation in each area within, or giving access to, bedrooms and must be powered both by the electrical service in the dwelling or building and by battery.

A person may not have a claim for relief against a property owner, a property purchaser, an authorized agent of a property owner or purchaser, a person in possession of real property ~~or a carbon monoxide detector installer, a closing agent or a lender~~ for any damages resulting from the proper operation, maintenance or effectiveness of a carbon monoxide detector.

Violation of this subsection does not create a defect in title.

Sec. 11. PL 2009, c. 162, §6 is amended to read:

Sec. 6. Transfer funds from Department of Public Safety, Office of the State Fire Marshal. The Commissioner of Public Safety ~~shall~~ may transfer up to \$100,000 from the Department of Public Safety, Office of the State Fire Marshal for the purpose of purchasing carbon monoxide detectors for distribution through the Maine State Housing Authority, community action agencies, local fire departments, associations representing realtors and any other organizations that could be used to promote the placement of carbon monoxide detectors in homes. Only organizations that are willing and have the ability to properly install these detectors are eligible to participate in this program. Purchase of carbon monoxide detectors may not be made, or a contract executed, without the approval of the Director of the Bureau of General Services within the Department of Administrative and Financial Services.

Sec. 12. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

PUBLIC SAFETY, DEPARTMENT OF

Fire Marshal - Office of 0327

Initiative: Provides one-time funding for the purchase of carbon monoxide detectors and educational materials.

OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2009-10	2010-11
All Other	\$0	\$115,000
OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	\$0	\$115,000

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

Effective 90 days following adjournment of the 124th
Legislature, Second Regular Session, unless otherwise indicated.