

Smoke Alarms & Emergency Exit Lighting

Holiday Homes and Short Stay accommodation

THE SHORT VERSION

Smoke alarms must be installed in every bedroom, associated corridors/hallways and each other storey, be interconnected where more than one alarm is required, and be accompanied by lighting to assist evacuation that activates with the smoke alarms. This is especially important because guests may be unfamiliar with the building layout.

FIRST - KNOW YOUR BUILDING CLASS

A short-stay holiday home does not automatically become Class 1b simply because it is offered for short-term rental. Under the NCC, a single dwelling generally remains Class 1a unless there are four or more single dwellings on one allotment used for short-term holiday accommodation.

The Shire's approach for an individual holiday home is therefore to retain the existing classification, while applying targeted fire-safety measures to improve occupant safety without triggering the full suite of Class 1b compliance requirements.

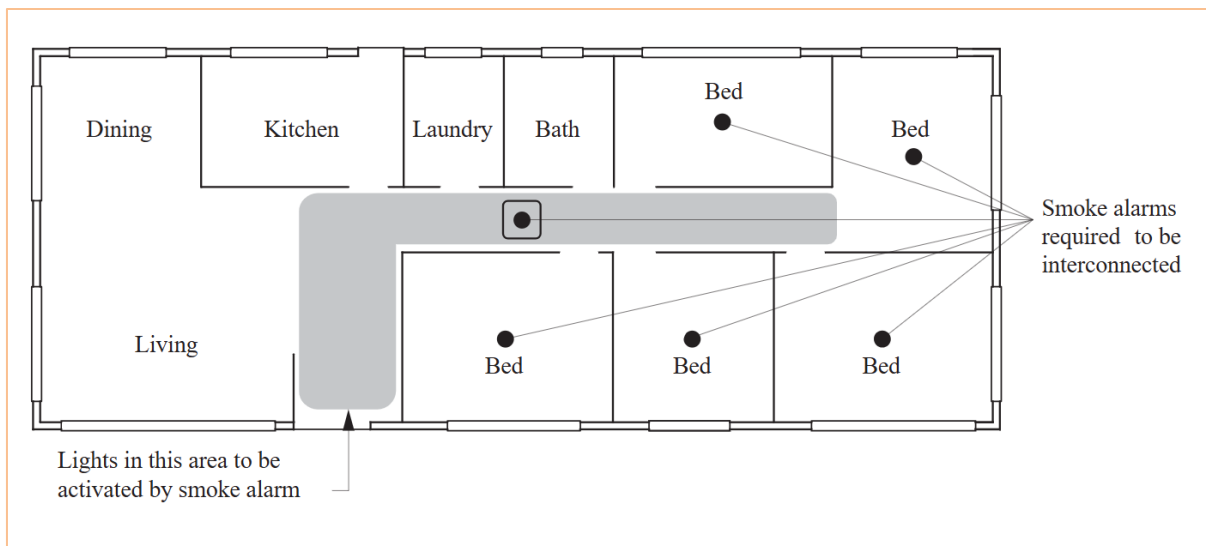
THE SHIRE'S FIRE-SAFETY APPROACH

SMOKE ALARMS

- Provide interconnected smoke alarms throughout the dwelling.
- Install alarms in all bedrooms, circulation areas and other appropriate locations so occupants are alerted wherever they are.
- Smoke alarms must comply with AS 3786.
- All smoke alarms must activate together.

EMERGENCY / EVACUATION LIGHTING

- Provide lighting along the designated path to the nominated exits.
- Lighting must activate when the smoke alarms activate.
- All smoke alarms and designated exit lighting should activate together as one emergency warning response.
- Clearly identify the designated exits and evacuation path on the plans.



Simplified illustration based on the principles shown in NCC 2022/2025 Figure 9.5.3

WHY WE USE THIS APPROACH

Full Class 1b compliance can trigger many additional requirements that are disproportionate for an existing single dwelling used as a holiday home, including access and other disability provisions. Our approach targets the principal overnight fire risk - early warning and finding the exit - without treating every short-stay dwelling as a full Class 1b building.

WHERE SHOULD THE SMOKE ALARMS GO?

Smoke alarms are typically installed on or near the ceiling in accordance with NCC Part 9.5.4.

Ceiling-mounted alarms must generally be at least 300 mm from the wall/ceiling corner and on sloping ceilings, 500 –1500 mm from the high point/apex.

Where ceiling installation is not possible, wall mounting is permitted within the specified 300–500 mm zone below the ceiling.

WHAT WE NEED TO SEE

- Smoke alarm locations clearly indicated on the submitted house plans.
- The evacuation-lighting arrangement clearly identified, including the area served.
- Details confirming the alarms comply with AS 3786 and are interconnected where required.
- Electrical work carried out by an appropriately licensed electrician.
- An Electrical Safety Certificate provided on completion, identifying the work undertaken and relevant NCC requirements.

ELECTRICIANS - WORDING FOR THE ELECTRICAL SAFETY CERTIFICATE

“Installed hardwired and interconnected AS3786 compliant smoke alarms and evacuation lighting that conforms with the requirements of the BCA 2022 Housing Provisions Part 9.5.”

Use this as a description of the work actually completed. Your electrician remains responsible for certifying the installation.

IMPORTANT - THIS IS NOT A CLASSIFICATION CHANGE

The measures described on this sheet are a Shire-specific fire-safety requirement for applicable short-stay holiday homes. They do not, by themselves, change the NCC building classification.

Where a building genuinely meets the NCC criteria for Class 1b, the full requirements applicable to that classification must be addressed.

The NCC defines Class 1b by specific criteria. These targeted measures do not themselves change the building's classification.

Where a Building Permit condition is used, it must relate to the particular building work and operate within the limits of the Building Act 2011.

Need more help?

For Building and Planning Approval and/or application questions, please contact the Shire's Development Services Team.

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Useful links

- NCC 2022 - [Part 9.5 Smoke alarms and evacuation lighting](#)
- Building and Energy - [Residential smoke alarm requirements](#)
- Building and Energy - [Industry Bulletin 167](#)

GUIDE ONLY This information sheet is a plain-English guide. It does not replace the NCC, Building Regulations 2012, AS 3786, electrical legislation or site-specific advice. Additional information may be requested during assessment.