

How to stop your home or property investment from going up in smoke

by Adam Smith

Three fatalities in a November house fire in Hamilton have fire fighters pushing for [mandatory smoke alarms in all rental properties](#) – and the figures certainly back up their case.

According to Fire Department statistics, 55% of residential fires were in rental properties, with almost 90% of fire fatalities happening in rentals, not owner-occupied homes.



Why? A lack of working smoke alarms - and in rental properties, it seems less attention is paid to those little white life-saving boxes. This includes not having enough smoke alarms installed in a property, but most importantly, not keeping batteries up to date, or switching alarms off because of false warnings. Iron Bridge Senior Property Manager, Michelle Docherty says, “It’s amazing how many people take them down when the batteries start to beep and don’t put in a new battery or don’t put them back up until asked!”

While making the installation and maintenance of smoke alarms mandatory in rental properties may add to the workload of landlords and property managers, that time can never outweigh the value in keeping tenants and investment properties safe.

Whether you’re a home owner, tenant, or investment property owner the same message applies – a smoke alarm is the very best defense for your home or rental property, saving lives and reducing the damage a fire could ravage on your property. An alarm is the only clear fire alert when people are asleep – your ears are your only indicator of fire danger.

“At Iron Bridge Property Management it’s part of our policy to insist on working smoke alarms in our rental properties,” says Christchurch Property Manager David Lewis. “And that policy well and truly paid off for one of our landlords just recently.

“Watching a movie with full surround sound one Saturday morning, the tenants noticed a persistent beeping over and above the stereo sound. They made their way outside to the front of the house and saw their bedroom engulfed in flames. While there was extensive damage to the house, the alarm got the tenants out of the house in time, and the fire brigade there quickly.”

“The batteries in the alarm were fresh,” says David, having just been changed when Daylight Savings started.

There’s no predicting when a fire can start so the only way to protect a property thoroughly is by alarming it strategically, and maintaining batteries and the alarms themselves.

“We’ve recently heard of two spontaneous fires in rental properties, starting simply from faulty appliances,” says Pam Marshall, General Manager, Iron Bridge Property Management.

“That’s why we are so stringent on checking in with tenants and landlords on smoke alarm maintenance. It’s the only way to be prepared.”

Protecting your investment property and the lives within it is a non-negotiable, so do make sure your rental property, your tenants, and your own home are up to date. You can find out more about fire maintenance [here](#).

If you want to know more about how we can look after your rental property, [give us a call](#) – [Iron Bridge Property Management](#).