



LONGMEADOW FIRE DEPARTMENT

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Guidelines for residential smoke detector inspections

What is required?

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 148, Sections 26F and 26F ½ require the local fire department to inspect all residential properties prior to sale or transfer of ownership. The specific requirements for a property are based upon the year the building was constructed and/or substantially renovated (i.e. the addition of a bedroom). The specific requirements based upon year of construction or renovation are listed later in this document.

How do I book an inspection?

Inspections may be scheduled online (preferred) at the link below or by calling the Fire Prevention Office at (413) 567-3357, Ext. 9107.

<https://www.longmeadow.org/1127/Smoke-Detector-Inspections-Scheduler>

When are inspections conducted?

Inspections are conducted on weekday mornings between 8:30 AM and 12:00 PM. They are normally scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays, but this may vary based upon inspector availability.

Does someone have to be present on the property?

Yes. A responsible party over the age of 18 must be present at the home at the time of inspection. This can be the owner, real estate agent, or any other representative.

How long does an inspection take?

Normally 10-20 minutes.

Is there a fee?

There is a \$50 fee for the required certificate of compliance. This fee can be paid either by check to the, "Town of Longmeadow," or by exact cash. The inspector does not carry change. There is for any follow-up inspections, if required.

When in the closing process should I schedule an inspection?

Per the state fire code, certificates of compliance are only valid for a period of 60 calendar days. We recommend scheduling your inspection approximately 4 weeks prior to closing, especially during peak times, typically May-August.

What if I have an alarm system?

It is common for residences in Longmeadow to utilize a “household fire warning system,” with monitoring capability, often as part of a home security system. These systems, depending on their design and level of coverage, may satisfy the smoke and/or carbon monoxide detector requirements for a home. While it is not required to be monitored, the system must be maintained in order for it to meet requirements. In the case of an alarm system where the inspector is unable to determine the level of maintenance or functionality, an inspection by a qualified alarm technician will be required. In all cases where an alarm system is present, the individual present during the inspection must have the codes, knowledge, and ability to reset the alarm system, or the inspection will not be able to be conducted at that time. If you have any questions about your alarm system’s ability to meet inspection requirements, please contact the Fire Prevention office.

Requirements by year of construction or major renovation

Prior to 1975

Smoke alarms

- At least one required per habitable level, including the basement
- On the ceiling at the base of each stairway
- On the ceiling outside each separate sleeping area
- Must use **photoelectric sensor**
- May be battery powered, hardwired, or a combination of both
- Cannot be more than 10 years old, or exceed manufacturer recommendation
- **Any detector installed after January 1, 2016 or newly installed must contain 10-year, sealed, non-rechargeable, non-replaceable battery.**
 - Detectors with a manufacture date after January 1, 2016 that do not have a 10-year sealed battery are not compliant

Carbon monoxide alarms

- At least one required per habitable level, including the basement
- Within 10 feet of all bedrooms
- **Combination** alarms can be used to meet both smoke and carbon monoxide detector requirements provided the following conditions are met:
 - Smoke sensor must be **photoelectric**
 - **Must have both a tone and *voice* to distinguish the alarm type**
- May be battery powered, plug-in with battery backup, hardwired with battery backup, or system type
- Must be under 7 years old OR manufacturer instructions

1975-August 27, 1997

Smoke alarms

- At least one required per habitable level, including the basement
- One on the ceiling at the base of each stairway
- One on the ceiling outside each separate sleeping area
- A minimum of one per 1,200 square feet of living space per area
- Must be hardwired and interconnected, with battery backup
- Detector must be under 10 years old
- Any replacement detectors must use **photoelectric** sensors

Carbon monoxide alarms

- At least one required per habitable level
- Must be within 10 feet of all bedroom doors
- **Combination** alarms can be used to meet both smoke and carbon monoxide detector requirements provided the following conditions are met:
 - Smoke sensor must be **photoelectric** if unit is within 20 feet of a kitchen or bathroom
 - **Must have both a tone and voice to distinguish the alarm type**
- May be battery powered, plug-in with battery backup, hardwired with battery backup, or system type
- Must be under 7 years old or manufacturer instructions

August 27, 1997-January 1, 2008

Smoke alarms

- At least one required per habitable level
- One at the base of each stairway
- One outside each separate sleeping area
- One inside every bedroom
- One per 1,200 square feet of living space per level
- Must be hardwired, interconnected alarms with battery backup
- If within 20 feet of a kitchen or bathroom, unit must use **photoelectric** sensor
- Replacement detectors must use **photoelectric** sensor
- Must be under 10 years old

Carbon monoxide alarms

- At least one required per habitable level, including basements
- Must be within 10 feet of all bedroom doors
- **Combination** alarms can be used to meet both smoke and carbon monoxide detector requirements provided the following conditions are met:
 - Smoke sensor must be **photoelectric** if within 20 feet of a kitchen or bathroom
 - **Must have both a tone and voice to distinguish the alarm type**
- May be battery powered, plug-in with battery backup, hardwired with battery backup, or system type
- Must be under 7 years old or manufacturer recommendation

January 1, 2008-February 1, 2011

Smoke alarms

- At least one per habitable level, including the basement
- One at the base of each stairway
- One outside each sleeping area
- One inside every bedroom
- Minimum of one alarm per 1,200 square feet of living space per level
- Must be hardwired and interconnected with battery backup
- Must use **photoelectric** sensor
- Must be under 10 years old

Heat alarms

- Required in attached garages or garages under the residence
- Must be hardwired and interconnected (with or without battery backup) to smoke detection system

Carbon monoxide alarms

- At least one per habitable level, including basements
- Within 10 feet of all bedroom doors
- Must be hardwired and interconnected with battery backup (may be in combination or separate from smoke detection system)
- **Combination** alarms can be used to meet both smoke and carbon monoxide detector requirements provided the following conditions are met:
 - Smoke sensor must be **photoelectric**
 - **Must have both a tone and voice to distinguish the alarm type**
- Must be under 7 years old or manufacturer instructions

After February 4, 2011

Smoke alarms

- At least one per habitable level, including the basement
- One at the base of each stairway
- One outside each sleeping area
- One inside every bedroom
- Minimum of one alarm per 1,200 square feet of living space per level (1,000 square feet for new construction)
- Must be hardwired and interconnected with battery backup
- Must use **photoelectric** sensor
- Must be under 10 years old

Heat alarms

- Required in attached garages or garages under the residence
- Must be hardwired and interconnected (with or without battery backup) to smoke detection system

Carbon monoxide alarms

- At least one per habitable level, including basements
- Within 10 feet of all bedroom doors
- Must be hardwired and interconnected with battery backup (may be in combination or separate from smoke detection system)

- **Combination** alarms can be used to meet both smoke and carbon monoxide detector requirements provided the following conditions are met:
 - Smoke sensor must be **photoelectric**
 - **Must have both a tone and voice to distinguish the alarm type**
- Must be under 7 years old or manufacturer instructions

Common reasons properties do not pass on the first inspection:

1. **Smoke and/or carbon monoxide detectors are expired.** Smoke detectors expire 10 years after the date of manufacture, unless otherwise listed by the manufacturer. Carbon monoxide detectors expire 7-10 years after the date of manufacture. The inspector checks dates on all detectors.
2. **Ionization smoke detectors used when not allowed.** Photoelectric sensor smoke detectors are always allowed, while ionization are only allowed under limited circumstances. When in doubt, use photoelectric. Any detector that has “contains radioactive material” on the label is ionization. Any newly installed detector must be photoelectric.
3. **Hardwired detectors replaced with battery powered units.** If a detector location was hardwired, it must remain that way (possible exception of some alarm systems, contact the fire prevention office prior to removing any hardwired unit to avoid future issues).
4. **Household fire warning system not maintained and/or unknown reset codes.** While not required to be monitored, these systems must be maintained. In many cases, the fire department cannot verify that components of the system are operational and will require a qualified alarm technician to inspect the system. The fire department will not inspect a system if the individual on scene does not know the reset codes.