

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2011

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SENATE DRS15076-LM-65 (02/25)

Short Title: Rental Property/Lithium Battery Smoke Alarms.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senator Bingham.

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT PROVIDING THAT AFTER DECEMBER 31, 2011, LANDLORDS SHALL, WHEN INSTALLING A NEW SMOKE ALARM OR REPLACING AN EXISTING SMOKE ALARM, INSTALL A TEN-YEAR LITHIUM BATTERY SMOKE ALARM EXCEPT IN CERTAIN CASES, AND PROVIDING THAT LANDLORDS MAY DEDUCT FROM THE TENANT SECURITY DEPOSIT DAMAGE TO A SMOKE ALARM OR CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE NORTH CAROLINA CHILD FATALITY TASK FORCE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 42-42 reads as rewritten:

"§ 42-42. **Landlord to provide fit premises.**

(a) The landlord shall:

...

(5) Provide operable smoke ~~detectors,alarms,~~ either battery-operated or electrical, having an Underwriters' Laboratories, Inc., listing or other equivalent national testing laboratory approval, and install the smoke ~~detectors-alarms~~ in accordance with either the standards of the National Fire Protection Association or the minimum protection designated in the manufacturer's instructions, which the landlord shall retain or provide as proof of compliance. The landlord shall replace or repair the smoke ~~detectors alarms~~ within 15 days of receipt of notification if the landlord is notified of needed replacement or repairs in writing by the tenant. The landlord shall ensure that a smoke ~~detector-alarm~~ is operable and in good repair at the beginning of each tenancy. Unless the landlord and the tenant have a written agreement to the contrary, the landlord shall place new batteries in a battery-operated smoke ~~detector-alarm~~ at the beginning of a tenancy and the tenant shall replace the batteries as needed during the ~~tenancy-tenancy,~~ except where the smoke alarm is a 10-year lithium battery smoke alarm as required by subdivision (5a) of this subsection. Failure of the tenant to replace the batteries as needed shall not be considered as negligence on the part of the tenant or the landlord.

(5a) After December 31, 2011, when installing a new smoke alarm or replacing an existing smoke alarm, install a 10-year lithium battery smoke alarm. However, the landlord shall not be required to install a 10-year lithium



battery smoke alarm as required by this subdivision in either of the following circumstances:

- a. The dwelling unit is equipped with a hardwired smoke alarm with a battery backup.
- b. The dwelling unit is equipped with a smoke alarm combined with a carbon monoxide alarm that meets the requirements provided in subdivision (7) of this section.

...

(7) Provide a minimum of one operable carbon monoxide ~~detector~~-alarm per rental unit per level, either battery-operated or electrical, that is listed by a nationally recognized testing laboratory that is OSHA-approved to test and certify to American National Standards Institute/Underwriters Laboratories Standards ANSI/UL2034 or ANSI/UL2075, and install the carbon monoxide ~~detectors~~-alarms in accordance with either the standards of the National Fire Protection Association or the minimum protection designated in the manufacturer's instructions, which the landlord shall retain or provide as proof of compliance. A landlord that installs one carbon monoxide ~~detector~~-alarm per rental unit per level shall be deemed to be in compliance with standards under this subdivision covering the location and number of ~~detectors~~-alarms. The landlord shall replace or repair the carbon monoxide ~~detectors~~-alarms within 15 days of receipt of notification if the landlord is notified of needed replacement or repairs in writing by the tenant. The landlord shall ensure that a carbon monoxide ~~detector~~-alarm is operable and in good repair at the beginning of each tenancy. Unless the landlord and the tenant have a written agreement to the contrary, the landlord shall place new batteries in a battery-operated carbon monoxide ~~detector~~-alarm at the beginning of a tenancy, and the tenant shall replace the batteries as needed during the tenancy. Failure of the tenant to replace the batteries as needed shall not be considered as negligence on the part of the tenant or the landlord. A carbon monoxide ~~detector~~-alarm may be combined with smoke ~~detectors~~-alarms if the combined ~~detector~~-alarm does both of the following: (i) complies with ANSI/UL2034 or ANSI/UL2075 for carbon monoxide alarms and ANSI/UL217 for smoke ~~detectors~~-alarms; and (ii) emits an alarm in a manner that clearly differentiates between detecting the presence of carbon monoxide and the presence of smoke. This subdivision applies only to dwelling units having a fossil-fuel burning heater, appliance, or fireplace, and in any dwelling unit having an attached garage. Any operable carbon monoxide detector installed before January 1, 2010, shall be deemed to be in compliance with this subdivision.

...."

SECTION 2. G.S. 42-43 reads as rewritten:

"§ 42-43. Tenant to maintain dwelling unit.

(a) The tenant shall:

...

(4) Not deliberately or negligently destroy, deface, damage, or remove any part of the premises, nor render inoperable the smoke ~~detector~~-alarm or carbon monoxide ~~detector~~-alarm provided by the landlord, or knowingly permit any person to do so.

...

(7) Notify the landlord, in writing, of the need for replacement of or repairs to a smoke ~~detector~~-alarm or carbon monoxide ~~detector~~-alarm. The landlord shall

1 ensure that a smoke ~~detector~~-alarm and carbon monoxide ~~detector~~-alarm are
2 operable and in good repair at the beginning of each tenancy. Unless the
3 landlord and the tenant have a written agreement to the contrary, the
4 landlord shall place new batteries in a battery-operated smoke ~~detector~~alarm
5 and battery-operated carbon monoxide ~~detector~~-alarm at the beginning of a
6 tenancy and the tenant shall replace the batteries as needed during the
7 ~~tenancy-tenancy~~, except where the smoke alarm is a 10-year lithium battery
8 smoke alarm as required by G.S. 42-42(a)(5a). Failure of the tenant to
9 replace the batteries as needed shall not be considered as negligence on the
10 part of the tenant or the landlord.

11"

12 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 42-44 reads as rewritten:

13 **"§ 42-44. General remedies, penalties, and limitations.**

14 ...

15 (a1) If a landlord fails to provide, install, replace, or repair a smoke ~~detector~~-alarm under
16 the provisions of G.S. 42-42(a)(5) or a carbon monoxide ~~detector~~-alarm under the provisions of
17 G.S. 42-42(a)(7) within 30 days of having received written notice from the tenant or any agent
18 of State or local government of the landlord's failure to do so, the landlord shall be responsible
19 for an infraction and shall be subject to a fine of not more than two hundred fifty dollars
20 (\$250.00) for each violation. After December 31, 2011, if the landlord installs a new smoke
21 alarm or replaces an existing smoke alarm, the smoke alarm shall be a 10-year lithium battery
22 smoke alarm, except as provided in G.S. 42-42(a)(5a). The landlord may temporarily
23 disconnect a smoke ~~detector~~-alarm or carbon monoxide ~~detector~~-alarm in a dwelling unit or
24 common area for construction or rehabilitation activities when such activities are likely to
25 activate the smoke ~~detector~~-alarm or carbon monoxide ~~detector~~-alarm or make it inactive.

26 (a2) If a smoke ~~detector~~-alarm or carbon monoxide ~~detector~~-alarm is disabled or
27 damaged, other than through actions of the landlord, the landlord's agents, or acts of God, the
28 tenant shall reimburse the landlord the reasonable and actual cost for repairing or replacing the
29 smoke ~~detector~~-alarm or carbon monoxide ~~detector~~-alarm within 30 days of having received
30 written notice from the landlord or any agent of State or local government of the need for the
31 tenant to make such reimbursement. If the tenant fails to make reimbursement within 30 days,
32 the tenant shall be responsible for an infraction and subject to a fine of not more than one
33 hundred dollars (\$100.00) for each violation. The tenant may temporarily disconnect a smoke
34 ~~detector~~-alarm or carbon monoxide ~~detector~~-alarm in a dwelling unit to replace the batteries or
35 when it has been inadvertently activated.

36"

37 **SECTION 4.** G.S. 42-51 reads as rewritten:

38 **"§ 42-51. Permitted uses of the deposit.**

39 Security deposits for residential dwelling units shall be permitted only for the tenant's
40 possible nonpayment of rent and costs for water or sewer services provided pursuant to
41 G.S. 62-110(g), damage to the premises, including the damage or destruction of a smoke or
42 carbon monoxide alarm, nonfulfillment of rental period, any unpaid bills that become a lien
43 against the demised property due to the tenant's occupancy, costs of re-renting the premises
44 after breach by the tenant, costs of removal and storage of tenant's property after a summary
45 ejectment proceeding or court costs in connection with terminating a tenancy. The security
46 deposit shall not exceed an amount equal to two weeks' rent if a tenancy is week to week, one
47 and one-half months' rent if a tenancy is month to month, and two months' rent for terms
48 greater than month to month. These deposits must be fully accounted for by the landlord as set
49 forth in G.S. 42-52."

50 **SECTION 5.** Sections 1 through 4 of this act become effective December 31,
51 2011. The remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law.