



Issue: State Mandates for 10-year Batteries in Smoke Alarms

Members of the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) are committed to supporting technological advancements and changes to national consensus codes/standards that will increase the number of operational smoke alarms in homes. Over the past two revision cycles, NFPA 72 National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code®, the International Residential Code (IRC), and the International Fire Code (IFC) have been updated to include measures designed to reduce the incidence of unwanted alarm activations and subsequent disabling of smoke alarms by consumers. Another effort to address these issues has been the introduction of a non-removable, or “sealed,” smoke alarm battery that is capable of powering the device for 10 years (i.e., “10-year battery”). Recent years have seen the introduction and/or passage of legislation in various states and cities aimed at requiring all smoke alarms relying on batteries as a primary power source to be powered by sealed 10-year batteries (i.e., “10-year mandate”).

Position: Consumers Should Be Free to Choose Smoke Alarm Features

NEMA recognizes that there are various stakeholder groups in favor of these laws because they believe that this technology enhances life safety by providing longer battery life while preventing consumers from removing the batteries. While NEMA supports the advancement of technologies that improve life safety, NEMA does not support legislation that attempts to mandate one type of life safety technology in a given market at the exclusion of other important technologies. NEMA’s position is that consumers should be free to choose which smoke alarms are present in their homes **provided those devices comply with consensus codes and standards.**

Importance: Life Safety Features Not Supported by a 10-year Battery

There are devices on the market that use several important life safety technologies not currently supported by a 10-year battery. These technologies include wireless interconnection, connection to a control unit, multiple sensing capabilities, and enhanced waking effectiveness for susceptible sub-populations. Under the imposition of a 10-year mandate, consumers would be precluded from purchasing and installing battery-operated smoke alarms with these features in their homes. Not only do 10-year mandates unnecessarily preclude other important technologies, but they might even prevent the introduction of future technologies that could also enhance consumer protection.

NEMA understands that some state legislatures may believe that smoke alarms with sealed 10-year batteries are effective in keeping operational smoke alarms in consumers’ homes and, therefore, will pass a 10-year mandate in spite of the preclusion of other important life safety technologies. In these instances, NEMA recommends that legislative language contain exemptions for key technologies, such as those mentioned above. In addition, we recommend that the mandate incorporate a realistic compliance date for the law to allow industry sufficient time to design, manufacture, test, and obtain third-party certification/listing for new products.

NEMA is the association of electrical equipment manufacturers, founded in 1926 and headquartered in Rosslyn, Virginia. Its member companies manufacture a diverse set of products including power transmission and distribution equipment, lighting systems, factory automation and control systems, and medical diagnostic imaging systems. Total U.S. shipments for electroindustry products exceed \$100 billion annually. We serve as a resource, working with the state and local jurisdictions in the interest of life safety.

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The National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) is the association of electrical equipment, medical imaging, and radiation therapy manufacturers. Founded in 1926 and headquartered in Rosslyn, Virginia, NEMA’s 400-plus member companies include a diverse collection of large, medium, and small businesses in over 50 market segments. Total U.S. shipments for NEMA member products exceeds \$100 billion.

Did You Know?

- NEMA Members include industry leaders and innovative small businesses that manufacture products used in the generation, transmission and distribution, control, and end-use of electricity.
- NEMA promotes safety, innovation, interoperability, environment, and market enhancement through advocacy, business information, and standards for products, systems, and technologies.
- NEMA publishes over 600 standards, application guides, white papers, and technical papers.
- NEMA responds to codes and standards proposals of other organizations in the U.S. and around the world, facilitating the development of international and North American harmonized standards.
- NEMA was named in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to work with federal agencies on efforts to enhance the efficiency, sustainability, and security of the electricity grid. As part of this, NEMA has been instrumental in the Smart Grid Interoperability Panel (SGIP) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Smart Grid Federal