



Tenants Protection Association (Christchurch) Inc.
Te Tōpū Tiaki-ā-Kainoho

(03) 379-2297
info@tpa.org.nz
Room 3, 301 Tuam Street Christchurch 8011
www.tpa.org.nz

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Press Release from Tenants Protection Association (ChCh) Incorporated – Christchurch

TPA says recent calls for mandatory smoke alarm installations in rental properties is an opportunity for all parties to come together to improve the safety and quality of rental housing.

Landlords need to take responsibility for having smoke alarms installed (minimum of one). They also need to be provided the education to ensure that they are installed in appropriate places so they don't go off unintentionally because of poorly ventilated bathrooms or kitchens.

Landlords would then have a responsibility for seeing that they are working. It would be reasonable to expect that when they do their property inspections alarms should be checked (minimum six monthly). If tenants have removed batteries or damaged the alarms they should be given a 14 day notice to remedy this. If alarms are not working or situated in the wrong place tenants also have the opportunity to serve a 14 day remedy notice to their landlord.

Homeowners and renters alike must take responsibility for ensuring that the alarms work!

Insurance companies too, have a role to play. They can fund campaigns around fire safety, (it's their community responsibility and makes good business practice) and therefore they should also be called to account as well.

It is somewhat ironic and incredibly distressing when we hear that with 35% rental households nationally, the fire service report that about half of the residential fire deaths occur in rental properties.

There will of course, be the comments that installing alarms will increase the rents. TPA does not buy into this argument. Compare this to the cost of all the services involved in responding to a call out/fire, the hospital/medical costs, investigation costs etc., it would appear the price of a smoke alarm is miniscule.

Surely the cost of life and the awful costs to all the people affected by a house fire should be paramount.

Helen Gatonyi
Manager