How to Test Your Smoke Detector

In the private rented sector, the installation of smoke detectors on each level of a property is the legal responsibility of the landlord as set out in the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015. As part of this legal responsibility, they must check that each detector is working on the first day of a new tenancy – thereafter, it is the tenant's responsibility to ensure that detectors are working effectively.

With this in mind, we have produced this flyer to act as a source of information for tenants when troubleshooting or testing the devices throughout their tenancies.
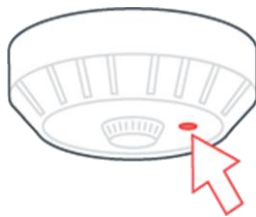
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How to Test Your Smoke Detector

Smoke detectors require little maintenance, but that maintenance could be life-saving. Although there are several makes and models that you might have, you can test their effectiveness in one of two ways.

Method 1:

Most smoke alarms will have a test button that can be employed here. Carefully stand on a stepladder, reach up and push it using a broom handle if necessary. The alarm should go off. If you don't hear anything, it means the battery is dead.

Method 2:

Light a couple of matches and then blow out the flame so that the smoke drifts up towards the smoke alarm. If the detector is working, the alarm will go off.

How often should I test a smoke alarm?

Some people recommend testing it once a month; some recommend testing it when the clocks change. It's up to you - test your alarms as often as you feel comfortable doing so.

General smoke alarm maintenance

- Clean dust away wherever necessary
- Never remove the battery to use in something else because you may forget to replace it
- Replace the battery on an annual basis even if it is still working
- Replace the alarm every ten years or so