

Safety Switches and Smoke Alarm Requirements

Safety Switches are required in tenanted residential properties

From 1st March 2006, owners of leased domestic residences must have a safety switch installed for the power circuit of the residence within 6 months of a residential tenancy being entered into, or by the 29th February 2008, whichever is the sooner.

By 1st March 2008, the state government will require all tenanted domestic residences in Queensland to be compliant and have a safety switch installed for all power circuits to protect the safety of a lessee

what does the legislation mean for landlords and tenants?

Property managers should be conducting an audit of all rental properties to determine whether a safety switch is installed. If the property was constructed after 1992, it will almost certainly have a safety switch installed. However if the dwelling was constructed prior to 1992, you should be asking an electrician to check whether a safety switch is installed. Be aware that with older properties, an electrician will also check whether a re-wire will be required before a safety switch can be installed.

Agents and landlords must be proactive in order to ensure the safety of tenants. It is also important that you systematically check all managements and inform landlords of their obligations in your newsletters or monthly advices. You should also be providing the landlord with a quote to install a safety switch (there may be more than one circuit) and ensure that the landlord is compliant by the due dates.

Smoke alarm laws - July 2007 deadline

while we are focusing on safety issues relating to domestic leased properties, we are entering the cooler winter months and property managers should be aware of the heightened risk of house fires. While the electrician is checking wiring and installing a safety switch, why don't you also ask to have a couple of smoke alarms installed in the property?

From July 1 2007, the owners of all houses and units in Queensland must install at least one nine volt battery-powered alarm as a minimum. If the dwelling was constructed after July 1 1997 or has had significant renovations since that time, it will already have the mandatory hard-wired smoke alarms installed.

Although there is still time to comply with these new safety requirements, it is important not to delay the work until the last minute. The landlord has a duty of care to ensure the health and safety of a tenant, especially where there is reasonable risk of injury in older properties.

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