



## FACT SHEET

### No. 31 – Fire Safety for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People

Version 06

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#### FACT

The standard high frequency smoke alarm (3 100 Hz, 85 dB at a distance of three metres) is suitable to wake most mild to moderately hard of hearing people. People who are deaf or have a severe hearing loss (cannot hear less than 85 dB) may have difficulty in hearing conventional smoke alarms and evacuation systems. It may be necessary to ensure someone is assigned to help them escape (Source: Piesse, R. (Nov 2007) Journal of SHHH Australia Inc.).

#### SMOKE ALARMS FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE

There are specialised smoke alarms available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. These have a strobe light and/or a vibrating pad that can be placed under the pillow which activates when the smoke alarm sounds and can be interconnected with conventional audible alarms in different locations within the home. If one of the alarms senses smoke, all alarms will sound, the strobe will flash and the vibrating pad will vibrate.

*Australian Standard (AS) AS1603.17-2011 Automatic fire detection and alarm systems – Warning equipment for people with hearing impairment* applies to smoke alarms for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, however, the standard is not currently mandatory. If the AS3786 appears on a smoke alarm for hard of hearing people, it refers only to the smoke alarm sensing unit and does not include the strobe light or the vibrating pad.

People who wish to purchase smoke alarms suitable for deaf or hard of hearing people should contact the Deaf Society of NSW and ask about the Smoke Alarm Subsidy Scheme (SASS) or visit [www.deafsocietynsw.org.au/smokealarms](http://www.deafsocietynsw.org.au/smokealarms) which also has videos available about home fire safety.

#### EMERGENCY CALL 106

The 106 emergency relay service enables people who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech difficulty to contact emergency services through their TTY (also known as a teletypewriter or textphone). It is a dedicated text-based emergency relay service with direct access to fire, police and ambulance services. It is available 24 hours a day, everyday.

#### HOW IT WORKS:

- Dial 106. This is a toll-free number. You will be asked if you want police, ambulance or **fire** (type FFF or if you use your own voice, wait for the Relay Officer (RO) and say 'fire').
- The RO will stay on line to relay your conversation with the emergency service. Confirm your location.
- Do not hang up. Wait for a reply from the emergency service.
- This service is not available via speak and listen (speech to speech relay). These callers can dial 1800 555 727 and then ask for Triple Zero (000) or dial '000' directly.
- This service cannot be accessed by text message (SMS) on a mobile phone or by internet relay.
- Internet users should ring 133 677 and ask for 000.



For more information contact your local fire station or visit:  
[www.fire.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fire.nsw.gov.au) or [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) or [www.esa.act.gov.au](http://www.esa.act.gov.au)



**IN AN EMERGENCY CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000)**  
**PREVENT PREPARE PROTECT**

