

# “Choose PSA”

## Why do smoke alarms false alarm?

Here are some factors to consider if a smoke alarm is activating for no reason.

### POWER ISSUES



Power issues can cause the smoke alarm to activate. Unstable power or power interruptions can cause electrical spikes in the circuit, this may cause the smoke alarm to beep or alarm for a short period of time.

**Installer Tip** An EMI filter may help to filter out any interference caused by power issues

### AIR MOVEMENT



High air movement can cause the smoke alarm to false alarm.

**Installer Tip** Ensure smoke alarms are not installed near ceiling fans and air ducts

### RIPPLE FREQUENCY



In some areas of Southern Queensland, Central Coast NSW and Sydney, electricity suppliers are injecting an off-peak signal onto the network to remotely control devices like hot water systems and street lighting. These ripples usually occur in the early hours of the morning and can cause smoke alarms to beep or activate.

**Installer Tip** A ripple signal filter may help to eliminate the signal from mains power.

### SHARED CIRCUITS



Smoke alarms are commonly installed on a lighting circuit shared with other electrical products. These products can create electrical noise or interference which can activate the smoke alarm. This electrical noise and electro-magnetic interference may cause the smoke alarm to beep or alarm when the electrical products are activated. A large current load on the same circuit can cause it to false alarm. Products such as sweeping fans, lighting dimmers, poor quality (LED) lights, and heat lamps are examples.

**Installer Tip** Avoid putting too many high wattage appliances on the same circuit as the smoke alarms. An EMI filter may help to filter out any interference caused by lights or appliances

### HIGH HUMIDITY



High humidity could be causing the smoke alarm to false alarm. Water vapours can develop inside the smoke sensor causing smoke alarms to react the same way as it does smoke. Once humidity reaches 85%, false alarms could frequently occur.

**Tip** In high humidity, use a hair dryer to blow warm air through the smoke alarm to assist with drying out any moisture build up

### INSECTS AND DUST



Insects and dust are a common cause of false alarms.

**Tip** Regularly clean/vacuum your smoke alarm to remove any loose dust or dirt that may be inside the unit. Fumigate the base plate area using insect repellent wipes to deter insects (do not spray directly at alarm)

### STEAM



Steam from bathrooms and laundry can cause a smoke alarm to activate.

**Installer Tip** Do not install alarms within or outside bathrooms and laundries. Close bathroom and laundry doors.

### COOKING FUMES



Cooking fumes can cause a smoke alarm to activate especially when the smoke alarm is located too close to the kitchen.

**Installer Tip** Install smoke alarms at least 5 meters away from the kitchen area. Photoelectric smoke alarms are less prone to false alarms caused by cooking fumes

### WEAK BATTERIES



Weak batteries will cause beeping and increase the chance of false alarms.

**Tip** At the first sign of batteries going flat, replace with new alkaline batteries. Batteries should be replaced every 12 months regardless. Always use good quality, reliable batteries and ensure that they are inserted the correct way with firm contact on the battery terminals.



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