

Please find below the ABCB's response to a question taken on notice at the recent Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee Hearing into Smoke Alarms.

Question on Notice

Senator Ludwig:

“Do you recall what the suggested change was **{to the Australian Standard}**?” My parenthesis in bold.

ABCB Response:

AS3786 describes a standard method for testing the performance of smoke alarms. Circa 2007, it was proposed that Table 3.1 of the 1993 edition of AS3786 be revised. Table 3.1 was titled “Sensitivity Levels for Smoke Alarms” and it presented pass criteria for the two common types of smoke alarms. The pass criterion for photoelectric type smoke alarms was expressed in terms of smoke obscuration (% Obs/m); i.e. a measure of interference to a light beam caused by smoke. The pass criterion for ionisation type smoke alarms was expressed in the terms of an MIC (Measuring Ionisation Chamber) ‘X’ value; i.e. interference to a flow of ions caused by smoke.

The revision to this Table proposed a single pass criterion for both types of alarms, which would be expressed in terms of smoke obscuration (%Obs/m). This proposed pass criterion was unlikely to be achieved by a typical ionisation smoke alarm. Accordingly, the proposal was not supported by the ABCB on the basis that there was no scientific evidence to justify the potential elimination of typical ionisation smoke alarms, or an increase in cost, due to a proposed pass criterion that was inappropriate for a specific type of smoke alarm technology.