



TRANSCRIPT

Renewed Calls for Banning Ionization Smoke Alarms

Radio New Zealand National Interview:

9 August 2008

“There are renewed calls for a ban on ionization smoke alarms. . .”

Consumer New Zealand

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New Zealand Safety Council

“...10,000 people have died in America because they had the wrong alarm...”

New Zealand Fire Service

“...as long as they have working smoke alarms they’ve done what they can...”

'Renewed Calls for Banning Ionization Smoke Alarms'

Radio New Zealand National Interview

N.Z. Safety Council | Consumer N.Z. | N.Z. Fire Service
9 August 2008

Presenter - Radio N.Z.

"There are renewed calls for a ban on ionization smoke alarms which one lobby group says are responsible for hampering not helping fire safety efforts across the country. The New Zealand Safety Council's issued a Smoke Alarm Report which pins a recent death on the alarms and says they were installed by the Fire Service and didn't give enough warning time. Tim Graham reports. . ."

Tim Graham - Presenter, Radio N.Z.

"The Council says ionization smoke alarms identify flames but not smouldering fire until it's too late. It's spent the past half decade endorsing photoelectric smoke alarms which are slightly more expensive but more sensitive to smoke."

The issue's been reinvigorated by the death of 91 year old Freda Birch who's more than 20 year old fridge caught alight and engulfed her Papakura home in June. Here's her next door neighbour, Roy Cutler. Unfortunately the smoke in the area was quite condensed and the poor lady was in the back bedroom unfortunately and she got overcome by the smoke. It was traumatic, it upset the wife and me a bit, we're in our 80's, it wasn't very nice.

The New Zealand Safety Council was formed by two dozen safety professionals in 2002 to focus on occupational health and safety. Their 'Smoke Alarm Report' says Freda's unit had three ionization smoke alarms fitted by the Fire Service and more of the same have been put into her neighbours homes following her death. The Council's Executive Director, David Calvert, says international research is mounting against ionization smoke alarms."

David Calvert - CEO, N.Z. Safety Council

"Chief Jay Fleming who's the Boston Fire Chief, he estimates 10,000 people have died in America because they had the wrong alarm and didn't get woken up in time. If you did a poll in New Zealand I doubt whether many of them would know what you we're talking about. The ordinary fire fighter's been kept in the dark because their senior management haven't told them."

Tim Graham - Presenter, Radio N.Z.

"A Fire Service spokesperson, Scott Sargentina says Fire Fighters have been under instruction to purchase and install nothing but photoelectric alarms in high risk communities since mid 2006. But nonetheless he's checking what types of smoke alarm have been installed this year during community projects by South Auckland Fire Brigades."

Scott Sargentina - Corporate Communications Manager, N.Z. Fire Service

"Well our recommendation is to get photoelectric smoke alarms, however, **as long as they have working smoke alarms they've done what they can to protect themselves and their families.** So, if they can, get photoelectrics, but if they've got ionization there's nothing that we see inherently dangerous in that." (emphasis added)

Tim Graham - Presenter, Radio N.Z.

"Two years ago Bill Whitley led Consumer New Zealand tests into both ionization and photoelectric smoke alarms. He says while it's confusing for consumers to tell the difference between the two at a glance, one alarm proved itself conclusively."

Bill Whitley - Head of Testing, Consumer N.Z.

"There was no doubt about it, photoelectric alarms do give much better performance when there is a slow smokey fire as opposed to a fast flaming fire. We do think that there is more public education required. We would like to see the Fire Service take a slightly different approach to it."

Tim Graham - Presenter, Radio N.Z.

"Bill Whitley says there is a difference of opinion between Consumer New Zealand and the Fire Service as to which type of fire alarm is best. Scott Argentina responds."

Scott Sargentina - Corporate Communications Manager, N.Z. Fire Service

"Tests have been done and my understanding is ionization alarms in some form of fires are not quite as responsive as photoelectric. That's not to say they are unresponsive in, in all fires. So photoelectric alarms are the way to go but **if New Zealanders put alarms in their homes, as long as they are working that's a very good first step.**" (emphasis added)

Tim Graham - Presenter, Radio N.Z.

"The New Zealand Safety Council says it sent a copy of its report to all members of Parliament and will shortly be contacting the Commerce Commission to ask for a ban on all ionization smoke alarms."

NZSC 'Smoke Alarm Report'

The cover of the NZSC Smoke Alarm Report from July 2008. It features the New Zealand Safety Council logo at the top, followed by several small images related to safety. Below the images, the title "THE NEW ZEALAND SAFETY COUNCIL SMOKE ALARM REPORT" is printed. A bold statement follows: "The New Zealand Safety Council's position is that Ionisation Smoke Alarms are BANNED FROM SALE in New Zealand". A note below states: "Prepared and written by David Calvert, with information from Adrian Butler, The World Fire Safety Foundation (WFSF) Chairman and all colleagues campaigning to remove ionization alarms from homes around the world (names listed at the end of this special report)." A section titled "In Memory of Freda Birch" includes a photograph of a smoke alarm and a photo of a burnt-out house. The report also discusses the recent replacement of ionization alarms with photoelectric ones in Freda Birch's unit. The final page shows the report's title, date (July 2008), and page number (Page 1 of 6).

AVAILABLE ONLINE

www.SmokeAlarmWarning.org/nzlegislation#nzsc

Hear the Radio Interview,
Read the Safety Council's Report. . .

. . .then check out the twenty year battle behind the
world's first, nationwide, photoelectric legislation.

NEW ZEALAND | The World's First, Nationwide, Photoelectric Legislation

The Twenty Year Battle to Save Lives

Since 2000, the World Fire Safety Foundation, the New Zealand Safety Council and Consumer New Zealand has been warning the public about the life-threatening danger with ionization smoke alarms.

Consumer N.Z. - 12 Years of Research

In Consumer New Zealand's smoke alarm research, from 2006 - 2018, (see below) every ionization alarm, failed every smoldering fire test, every time. After the third round of research, in July 2016, New Zealand became the first country in the world to introduce nationwide, photoelectric smoke alarm legislation.

Defending the Indefensible

Tragically, despite overwhelming evidence of their inherent defects, the Fire Service has failed to warn about ionization smoke alarms - defending the indefensible and **putting the public and their own firefighter's lives at risk**.

WFSF at Consumer New Zealand HQ



WFSF Chairman, Adrian Butler, with Consumer New Zealand CEO, Sue Chetwyn & staff | May 2012

consumer.
now you know

Consumer New Zealand Research
[2006](#) | [2010](#) | [2014](#) | [2018](#)

*"We think Ionization
alarms should not be sold..."*



New Zealand
Safety Council

"The New Zealand Safety Council (NZSC) is critical of the leadership of the New Zealand Fire Service in failing to properly promote photoelectric alarms in accordance with AFAC's official position."

David Calvert, Registered Safety Professional, Former CEO and Fellow of the N.Z. Safety Council | NZSC 'Smoke Alarm Report'
July 2008 | Page 6, Para 5 (see report [below](#))



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MENU

www.SmokeAlarmWarning.org/nzlegislation