

Marysville Fire District
1094 Cedar Avenue
Marysville, Washington 98270
www.marysvillefiredistrict.org



CO Alarms required by January 1, 2013

The statutory deadline for installation of CO Alarms in residential settings is fast approaching.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that cannot be seen or smelled and can kill a person in minutes. Carbon monoxide can quickly build up to unsafe levels in enclosed or semi-enclosed areas. Carbon monoxide killed over 1,000 Washington residents between 1990 and 2005. In the aftermath of the December 2006 windstorm, over 300 people were treated at hospital emergency rooms for CO poisoning and eight people died. Generators in garages, or near air intakes, and use of charcoal or gas grills indoors, are common causes of CO poisoning during power outages. Fuel burning appliances, attached garages, and fireplaces are also sources of CO.

Beginning January 1, 2011, state law required CO alarms to be installed in all new single family homes and residences, including apartments, condominiums, hotels, and motels.

State law requires CO alarms be installed in existing apartments, condominiums, hotels, motels and single-family residences by January 1, 2013.

Owner-occupied single-family residences, legally occupied before July 26, 2009, are not required to have CO alarms until they are sold. The seller is required to equip the residence with CO alarms before any other person legally occupies the home. Substitute Senate Bill 6472 added CO alarms to the Purchase/Sale disclosure form in 2012.

Exemptions:

SSB 5561, implemented as RCW 19.27.530, charged the State Building Code Council with adoption of administrative rules (WAC 51-50-0908) to implement the carbon monoxide alarm law and consider exemptions for some building classifications. Sleeping units or dwelling units in new or existing motels, hotels, college dormitories, and DSHS licensed boarding home and residential treatment facilities, which do not themselves contain a fuel-burning appliance, or a fuel-burning fireplace, or have an attached garage, but are located in a building with a fuel-burning appliance, or a fuel-burning fireplace, or an attached garage, need not be provided with CO alarms provided that:

The sleeping unit or dwelling unit is not adjacent to any room that contains a fuel-burning appliance, a fuel-burning fireplace, or an attached garage; and

The sleeping unit or dwelling unit is not connected by duct work or ventilation shafts with a supply or return register in the same room to any room containing a fuel-burning appliance, a fuel-burning fireplace, or to an attached garage; and

The building has a common area CO alarm system.

Enforcement:

Local code officials will check for compliance with the CO alarm installation requirements when a permit is required for new construction and most alterations, repairs or additions.

CO alarm installation requirements:

1. Alarms must be located outside of each separate sleeping area, in the immediate vicinity of the bedroom and on each level of the residence.
2. Single station carbon monoxide alarms must be listed as complying with UL 2034, and installed in accordance with the code and the manufacturer's instructions.
3. Combined CO and smoke alarms are permitted.

For more information

State Building Code Council staff can be reached at 360-407-9279

CO poisoning and prevention – the Department of Health CO web page at:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/HomeSafety/Contaminants/CarbonMonoxide.aspx>

RCW 19.27.530

Carbon monoxide alarms — Requirements — Exemptions — Adoption of rules.

(1) By July 1, 2010, the building code council shall adopt rules requiring that all buildings classified as residential occupancies, as defined in the state building code in chapter [51-54 WAC](#), but excluding owner-occupied single-family residences legally occupied before July 26, 2009, be equipped with carbon monoxide alarms.

(2)(a) The building code council may phase in the carbon monoxide alarm requirements on a schedule that it determines reasonable, provided that the rules require that by January 1, 2011, all newly constructed buildings classified as residential occupancies will be equipped with carbon monoxide alarms, and all other buildings classified as residential occupancies will be equipped with carbon monoxide alarms by January 1, 2013.

(b) Owner-occupied single-family residences legally occupied before July 26, 2009, are exempt from the requirements of this subsection (2). However, for any owner-occupied single-family residence that is sold on or after July 26, 2009, the seller must equip the residence with carbon monoxide alarms in accordance with the requirements of the state building code before the buyer or any other person may legally occupy the residence following such sale.

(3) The building code council may exempt categories of buildings classified as residential occupancies if it determines that requiring carbon monoxide alarms are unnecessary to protect the health and welfare of the occupants.

(4) The rules adopted by the building code council under this section must (a) consider applicable nationally accepted standards and (b) require that the maintenance of a carbon monoxide alarm in a building where a tenancy exists, including the replacement of batteries, is the responsibility of the tenant, who shall maintain the alarm as specified by the manufacturer.

(5) Real estate brokers licensed under chapter [18.85 RCW](#) shall not be liable in any civil, administrative, or other proceeding for the failure of any seller or other property owner to comply with the requirements of this section or rules adopted by the building code council. [2012 c 132 § 4; 2009 c 313 § 2.]

Notes:

Findings -- 2012 c 132: See note following RCW [64.06.020](#).

Intent -- 2009 c 313: "The legislature recognizes that carbon monoxide poses a serious threat. According to national statistics from the centers for disease control, carbon monoxide kills more than five hundred people and accounts for an estimated twenty thousand emergency department visits annually. Specifically, Washington state has experienced the dire effects of carbon monoxide poisoning. In the storms that struck Washington in December 2006, it was estimated that over one thousand people in the state were seen at hospital emergency rooms with symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, and eight people reportedly died of carbon monoxide exposure. It is the intent of the legislature to implement policies to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future." [2009 c 313 § 1.]

If you would like more information or to schedule an interview about this release please contact Division Chief Tom Maloney directly at 360-363-8506 or tmaloney@marysvillewa.gov