

# UC Monthly Safety Spotlight, October 2013

## FAQs on Carbon Monoxide (CO) Devices

As of July 1, 2011, the Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act (Senate Bill 183) requires all single-family homes with an attached garage or a fossil fuel source to install carbon monoxide alarms within the home. Owners of a multi-family leased or rental dwellings, such as apartment buildings, are required to comply with the law by January 1, 2013.

- Carbon Monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that is produced from heaters, fireplaces, furnaces, and many types of appliances and cooking devices. It can also be produced from vehicles that are idling. For more information, please see
- A dwelling unit is defined as a single-family dwelling, duplex, lodging house, dormitory, hotel, motel, condominium, time-share project, or dwelling unit in a multiple-unit dwelling unit building. By definition, a duplex is not considered a single family dwelling.
- The law requires that CO alarms be installed in multi-unit (apartment) occupancies if there is fossil fuel burning appliances or attached garages. There isn't an exception for dwellings without direct access from the garage to the living area as CO from the garage can travel through openings and ventilation systems entering into the living space.
- The law requires that CO alarms be installed when fossil fuel appliances are used. Since common areas and hallways leading to the living units can produce CO which could enter the living units by ventilation systems, an alarm would be located within the living unit.
- A *carbon monoxide alarm* is a stand alone unit which is tested to Underwriters Laboratory (UL) Standard 2034 and has its own built-in power supply and audible device. These units are typically installed in your single family dwelling. A *carbon monoxide detector* is a system unit which is tested to UL Standard 2075 and is designed to be used with a fire alarm system and receives its power from the fire alarm panel.
- There are two types of devices available. There are Carbon Monoxide alarms (CSFM category # 5276) and Carbon Monoxide detectors (CSFM category # 5278).
- SB-183 prohibits the marketing, distribution, or sale of devices unless it is approved and listed by the State Fire Marshal.
- The law requires that CO devices to be approved and listed by the State Fire Marshal prior to sale, marketing, or distribution. Existing CO devices installed prior to July 1, 2011 may continue to be utilized.
- Effective date for installation:
  - For a single-family dwelling having fossil fuel burning appliances and/or attached garages, the effective date is July 1, 2011.
  - For all other dwelling units having fossil fuel burning appliances and/or attached garages, the effective date is January 1, 2013.
  - For hotels and motels having fossil fuel burning appliances and/or attached garages, the effective date is January 1, 2016.
- CO devices should be installed outside each sleeping area of the home including the basement. The manufacturer's installation instruction should also be followed. For maximum protection against CO gas, it is recommended that a CO device be installed in each sleeping room.
- According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 720, the location for effective performance is not generally dependent on mounting height. The density of carbon monoxide is similar to that of air at room temperature, and carbon monoxide generally mixes readily with air. The manufacturer's installation instruction should also be followed.

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- Can I replace my existing smoke detector with a carbon monoxide device? No. By law, both smoke alarms/detectors and carbon monoxide devices are required to be installed in all dwellings. However, a combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarm/detector will satisfy both requirements.
- Information on CSFM listed carbon monoxide devices can be found at: <http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/strucfireengineer/pdf/bml/CSFM%20listed%20carbon%20monoxide%20devices.pdf> . This document is updated periodically.
- The CAL FIRE/Office of the State Fire Marshal approved and listed the CO alarms but enforcement of the requirement could fall upon the “Enforcing Agency” as designated by statute or regulations. Normally, a typical enforcing agency is your local fire and/or building department.
- For other questions, contact your local enforcing agencies, such as local building and fire departments. Regulation information is available on the California Department of Housing and Community Development website at: <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/>. Information on the hazards of carbon monoxide is available from the California Department of Public Health website at <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/DEFAULT.aspx>.

Info from

<http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/strucfireengineer/pdf/bml/Frequently%20asked%20questions%20on%20Carbon%20Monoxide.pdf>

[http://www.fire.ca.gov/communications/communications\\_firesafety\\_carbonmonoxide.php](http://www.fire.ca.gov/communications/communications_firesafety_carbonmonoxide.php)

[http://www.fire.ca.gov/communications/downloads/fact\\_sheets/CarbonMonoxide.pdf](http://www.fire.ca.gov/communications/downloads/fact_sheets/CarbonMonoxide.pdf)