

Carbon monoxide alarms

Carbon monoxide (CO) alarms are a valuable safety tool. There are now CO alarm requirements for new homes, but they are **recommended for all homes**.

CO alarms are not a substitute for prevention. The tips inside this brochure will help you prevent a carbon monoxide tragedy from occurring in your home.

Building code requirements

The current building code (which came into force September 2, 2007) requires CO alarms in new houses if there is a fuel-burning appliance (such as a furnace or water heater) or an attached garage.

CO alarms are required in new condos/multi-family homes if the unit has a self-contained fuel-burning appliance or shares a wall or ceiling with a parking garage.

What to look for when buying carbon monoxide alarms

CO alarms must meet the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standard. When you buy a CO alarm, make sure it is **certified**, and follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation, use and maintenance.

Where to install carbon monoxide alarms

The alarms should be installed in bedrooms or within five metres of bedroom doors. They may also be required in a service room that encloses a fuel-burning appliance which serves multi-family suites.

Alberta's Safety System

Alberta Municipal Affairs works in partnership with the Safety Codes Council, municipalities, corporations, agencies, and other organizations to deliver effective community-focused public safety programs and services to Albertans.

Questions or more information:

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Please place your agency or municipality contact information in the space below.

These brochures may be updated periodically. They have no legal status and cannot be used as an official interpretation of the various bylaws, codes and regulations currently in effect.

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Safety Tips

Carbon Monoxide Safety



Alberta



Carbon monoxide safety

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas. It is colourless, odourless and tasteless, and breathing CO can cause illness or death.

CO is produced when a fuel, such as gasoline, natural gas, propane or wood, burns incompletely. Fuel-burning appliances, like furnaces and water heaters, can produce CO if they are not installed, used or maintained properly.

Maintaining fuel-burning appliances

You should have your fuel-burning appliances inspected by a qualified heating professional once a year.

Between inspections, monitor your appliances and call a professional if:

- the flame on your natural gas furnace, water heater or stove is yellow. The flame should be a clear blue with occasional yellow tips (some natural gas fireplaces may be designed to have yellow flames); or
- you find cracks, holes, separations, rust, stains or carbon deposits on heating ducts or pipes.

Make sure your appliances get the proper ventilation they need:

- Your chimney should be inspected and cleaned every year. Between inspections, make sure leaves, snow, ice and other debris do not block the chimney.
- Each furnace, water heater, gas clothes dryer or other appliance must have a proper venting system.
- Temporary gas space heaters or wood-burning stoves and fireplaces must have a fresh-air supply. If there is no permanent duct, open a window when burning solid fuels or using temporary gas heaters.

Using appliances and machinery properly

- Once you start your car, move it outside the garage and close the garage door. Never leave a vehicle running in an enclosed space.
- Use only properly designed and vented fuel-burning space heaters to heat any enclosed space.
- Never use fuel-powered equipment such as barbecues, gas-powered lawnmowers, snow-blowers or chainsaws inside a confined space.

Carbon monoxide poisoning: Know the symptoms, and know what to do

Symptoms of CO poisoning include:

- headaches;
- nausea;
- drowsiness;
- dizziness;
- confusion; and
- loss of co-ordination or judgment.

If you, another person, or a pet show symptoms of CO poisoning:

- leave the house immediately;
- call 911 or the local fire department from a neighbour's house. Tell emergency responders that you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning; and
- do not go back into the house until the fire department says it's safe.