

Carbon Monoxide alarms required in all single family homes.

The 2006 legislative session passed a new law requiring carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in all single family homes and multifamily apartment units. Any home for which a building permit is issued after Jan. 1, 2007, will be required to have carbon monoxide alarms installed upon completion of the project. All existing single-family homes must have carbon monoxide alarms installed prior to Aug. 1, 2008. All existing multi-family dwellings are required to have carbon monoxide alarms in place by Aug. 1, 2009. [MN § 299F.50](#)

What is Carbon Monoxide?

CO is an odorless, colorless, tasteless, poisonous gas produced by incomplete burning of carbon-based fuels, including gasoline, oil and wood. CO has the ability to interfere with normal human intake of oxygen.

How can it hurt me?

When CO gets into the body, it combines with chemicals in the blood and prevents blood from bringing oxygen to cells, tissues and organs. High-level CO exposure can cause serious health effects and death. Symptoms of CO poisoning can include vision problems, reduced alertness and general reduction in mental and physical functions.

Where does it come from?

CO can accumulate to dangerous levels indoors when fuel-burning devices such as stoves and furnaces are not properly operated, vented or maintained. Running a car for too long in a closed garage is also a known risk. Often within 10 minutes of closing a garage door with a car running inside, the amount of CO buildup can prove lethal.

Carbon Monoxide alarms SAVE LIVES.

Safety in your home should be your top priority. Carbon monoxide is known as a “silent killer.” By placing alarms in the house and the garage, you will be alerted the moment CO levels reach unsafe levels. By enforcing the CO alarm law, fire departments around the country are proactively saving lives. By taking the law seriously, homeowners can reduce the risk of injury or death from CO poisoning. Each year, 8,000 to 15,000 people are examined or treated for non-fire related CO poisoning. Don't become a statistic.

How much does a CO alarm cost?

Where can I find one?

CO alarms can be found in any local hardware store. Prices are reasonable but do vary. They are typically easy to install and use. Follow manufacturers' recommendations for alarm placement in your home. Alarms with a digital readout are recommended since they will show you the exact level of CO in your home.

Test your alarms regularly.

Remember, CO alarms are not a substitute for smoke alarms. Install both smoke alarms and CO alarms in your home and test both monthly. Replace the batteries yearly and replace the entire

unit according to the manufacturer's instructions, which is usually every five years Smoke alarms should be replaced every ten years.

What to do when alarm sounds.

If the alarm sounds, get out of your home immediately. Leave the door open for ventilation purposes as you leave. Call 911 as soon as you get to a phone, they will send someone out and assess the situation. Before you return, have your home inspected by a professional and make sure to repair the problem.

For more information, call the Fergus Falls Fire Department at 218-736-6983 or visit the [Minnesota Department of Health](#) section on carbon monoxide.