

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Frequently Asked Questions

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

1. What is Senate Bill No. 183 (SB-183)?

SB-183, also known as the “Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act,” is a California senate bill that requires property owners to install a carbon monoxide detector in any other building in which people will be living.

2. What is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon monoxide (CO) 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 by vehicles that are idling.

3. What is the effective date for installing a CO device?

For a single-family dwelling (e.g. private homes and guest houses) the effective date is July 1, 2011. For all other dwelling units (e.g. apartments) the effective date is January 1, 2013.

4. Where can I find a list of all CSFM listed CO devices?

A list of approved CO devices can be found at http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/strucfireengineer/strucfireengineer_bml.php.

5. What is the definition of a dwelling unit?

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.”

6. Where should CO devices be installed in homes?

They should be installed on every level of the home including the basement, making sure they are installed outside each sleeping area. The manufacturer’s installation instructions should also be followed.

7. How many types of CO devices are available?

There are three types. 1) carbon monoxide alarms (CSFM category # 5276), 2) carbon monoxide detectors (CSFM category # 5278), and 3) combination smoke/carbon monoxide detector (CSFM category # 7256 or 7257).

8. What is the difference between a CO alarm and a CO detector?

A CO 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. They are similar to your smoke alarm. A CO 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.

9. Are CO devices required to be approved by the State Fire Marshal?

Yes. SB-183 prohibits the marketing, distribution, or sale of devices unless it is approved and listed by the State Fire Marshal.

10. If someone has a CO device that is not listed by the State Fire Marshal prior to the law, can they maintain it or does it have to be replaced?

The law requires that CO devices to be approved and listed by the State Fire Marshal. It does not prohibit someone who already owns the device prior to the effective date of Senate Bill (SB) 183 from leaving it installed.

11. Where does one obtain a copy of a California State Fire Marshal (CSFM) listing of CO devices?

Copies of CSFM listing of CO devices can be found on the State Fire Marshal website at http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/strucfireengineer/strucfireengineer_bml.php Scroll down and click "List of Approved Devices."

12. Where can I go to receive further information on Carbon Monoxide?

You may go the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL-FIRE) web site at <http://www.fire.ca.gov> and click on Carbon Monoxide under "Hot Topics".

Adapted from information posted on the Office of the State Fire Marshal's website, <http://osfm.fire.ca.gov>.