

# CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS



This handout is intended only as a guide and is based in part on the 2015 Minnesota Residential Code, Minnetrista City ordinances, and good building practice. While every attempt has been made to insure the correctness of this handout, no guarantees are made to its accuracy or completeness. Responsibility for compliance with applicable codes and ordinances falls on the owner or permit applicant. For specific questions regarding code requirements, refer to the applicable codes or contact your local Building Department.

Any questions regarding the CO alarm statute should be directed to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety at (651) 201-7000.

Carbon monoxide alarms will be required by the Minnesota Building Code in new construction and **whenever there is a permit issued for any type of work on an existing dwelling unit or townhouse that contains a fuel-fuel fired appliance or an attached garage.**

Carbon monoxide alarms must be installed on each floor containing sleeping rooms. The Minnesota Building Code permits either single station alarms or approved systems.

In existing dwellings, any time a permit is issued for any work (building, plumbing, heating, ventilating, air-conditioning, electrical, swimming pools, or retaining walls), carbon monoxide alarms must be installed. If you hire a roofing contractor to install a new roof on your house, CO alarms are required. If you install a retaining wall in your rear yard and a permit is required, CO alarms are required. If you construct a shed in your rear yard that requires a permit, CO alarms are required. If you hire a plumber to install a new water heater in your home, CO alarms are required. The responsibility for installing the alarm falls on the permit applicant. Even if the work is exterior, CO alarms are required if any fuel burning appliances exist or if you have an attached garage. The text from the Minnesota Building Code follows.

## SECTION R315 CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

**R315.1 Carbon monoxide alarms.** For new construction, every one-family dwelling unit, two-family dwelling unit, and each townhouse dwelling unit shall have an approved and operational carbon monoxide alarm installed when one of the following conditions occur:

1. Fuel-fired appliances are installed; or
2. Have attached garages.

**R315.1.1 Installation.** Carbon monoxide alarms shall be installed outside and not more than 10 feet from each separate sleeping area or bedroom. Alarms shall be installed on each level containing sleeping areas or bedrooms.

**R315.2 Carbon monoxide detection systems.** Carbon monoxide detection systems that include carbon monoxide detectors and audible notification appliances, installed and maintained in accordance with this section for carbon monoxide alarms and NFPA 720, shall be permitted. The carbon monoxide detectors shall be listed as complying with UL 2075. Where a household carbon monoxide detection system is installed, it shall become a permanent fixture of the occupancy, owned by the homeowner and shall be monitored by an approved supervising station.

**Exception:** Where carbon monoxide alarms are installed meeting the requirements of Section R315.1, compliance with Section 315.2 is not required.

**R315.3 Where required in existing dwellings.** Where work requiring a permit occurs in existing dwellings that have attached garages or in existing dwellings within which fuel fired appliances exist, carbon monoxide alarms shall be provided in accordance with Section R315.1.

**R315.4 Alarm requirements.** Single-station carbon monoxide alarms shall be listed as complying with UL 2034 and shall be installed in accordance with this code and the manufacturer's installation instructions.

In addition to the Building Code requirements for CO alarms, there is also a state statute passed by the Minnesota Legislature that applies to all dwellings in the state. It is more restrictive than the state building code. It requires **all** dwellings regardless of age and construction activity to have carbon monoxide alarms. The statute has some unique requirements that differ from the Building Code. CO alarms are required whether or not a permit is ever obtained. The statute requires CO alarms in all dwellings even if there are no fuel burning appliances or attached garages. Also, the statute only recognizes single station detectors and not systems.

Local building departments are not authorized to enforce the statute language. That is enforced by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. If you are exempt from having CO alarms by the Building Code, a city inspector will not require you to install one but that does not waive the statute. A copy of the statute follows.

#### **Minnesota Statutes 299F.50**

##### **[299F.50] DEFINITIONS.**

Subdivision 1. **Scope.** As used in sections 299F.50 to 299F.52, the terms defined in this section have the meanings given them.

Subd. 2. **Installed.** "Installed" means that an approved carbon monoxide alarm is hard-wired into the electrical wiring, directly plugged into an electrical outlet without a switch, or, if the alarm is battery-powered, attached to the wall of the dwelling.

Subd. 3. **Single and multifamily dwelling.** "Single and multifamily dwelling" means any building or structure which is wholly or partly used or intended to be used for living or sleeping by human occupants.

Subd. 4. **Dwelling unit.** "Dwelling unit" means an area meant for living or sleeping by human occupants.

Subd. 5. **Approved carbon monoxide alarm.** "Approved carbon monoxide alarm" means a device meant for the purpose of detecting carbon monoxide that is certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory to conform to the latest Underwriters Laboratories Standards (known as UL2034 standards).

Subd. 6. **Operational.** "Operational" means working and in service.

**EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective January 1, 2007, for all newly constructed single family and multifamily dwelling units for which building permits were issued on or after January 1, 2007; August 1, 2008, for all existing single family dwelling units; and August 1, 2009, for all multifamily dwelling units.

##### **[299F.51] REQUIREMENTS FOR CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS.**

Subdivision 1. **Generally.** Every single family dwelling and every dwelling unit in a multifamily dwelling must have an approved and operational carbon monoxide alarm installed within ten feet of each room lawfully used for sleeping purposes.

Subd. 2. **Owner's duties.** The owner of a multifamily dwelling unit which is required to be equipped with one or more approved carbon monoxide alarms must:

- (1) provide and install one approved and operational carbon monoxide alarm within ten feet of each room lawfully used for sleeping; and
- (2) replace any required carbon monoxide alarm that has been stolen, removed, found missing, or rendered inoperable during a prior occupancy of the dwelling unit and which has not been replaced by the prior occupant prior to the commencement of a new occupancy of a dwelling unit.

Subd. 3. **Occupant's duties.** The occupant of each dwelling unit in a multifamily dwelling in which an approved and operational carbon monoxide alarm has been provided and installed by the owner must:

- (1) keep and maintain the device in good repair; and
- (2) replace any device that is stolen, removed, missing, or rendered inoperable during the occupancy of the dwelling unit.

Subd. 4. **Battery removal prohibited.** No person shall remove batteries from, or in any way render inoperable, a required carbon monoxide alarm.

Subd. 5. **Exceptions; certain multifamily dwellings and state-operated facilities.**

- (a) In lieu of requirements of subdivision 1, multifamily dwellings may have approved and operational carbon monoxide alarms installed between 15 and 25 feet of carbon monoxide producing central fixtures and equipment provided there is a centralized alarm system or other mechanism for responsible parties to hear the alarm at all times.
- (b) An owner of a multifamily dwelling that contains minimal or no sources of carbon monoxide may be exempted from the requirements of subdivision 1, provided that such owner certifies to the commissioner of public safety that such multifamily dwelling poses no foreseeable carbon monoxide risk to the health and safety to the dwelling units.
- (c) The requirements of this section do not apply to facilities owned or operated by the state of Minnesota.

**EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective January 1, 2007, for all newly constructed single family and multifamily dwelling units for which building permits were issued on or after January 1, 2007; August 1, 2008, for all existing single family dwelling units; and August 1, 2009, for all multifamily dwelling units.