



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on Carbon Monoxide (CO) Devices

The Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act (Senate Bill – SB 183) will require all single-family homes with an attached garage or a fossil fuel-fired appliance to install carbon monoxide devices 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.

To assist the public in understanding the new regulations for installing household carbon monoxide devices, the Fire District has compiled a list of frequently asked questions based on California Office of the State Fire Marshal (CSFM) information, current standards, and legislation.

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

SB-183 is also known as the “Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act”. This senate bill requires that a carbon monoxide (CO) device be installed in all dwelling units intended for human occupancy.

2. What is Carbon Monoxide?

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 by vehicle exhaust.

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

For a single-family dwelling, the effective date is July 1, 2011. For all other dwelling units, the effective date is January 1, 2013.

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

Click on, or go to, the link titled “List of Approved Devices”.
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 building.

6. Where should a CO device be installed in the home?

They should be installed outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home including the basement. 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).

FAQ on Carbon Monoxide (CO) Devices, page 2

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

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.

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 California 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 new CO devices 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 SB 183.

11. Where can I obtain a copy of a California State Fire Marshal (CSFM) listing?

A list of approved and listed CO devices is available on the CSFM website. For the most current list of approved devices, log on to the CSFM site at:

http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/licensinglistings/licenselisting_bml_searchcotest.php

Under "Category" click on the sort by "Number" button and select "5276-CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS" or "5278-CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS". Click on "Search" to open a list of all alarms or detectors that are currently approved and listed by the CSFM.

12. Quick Facts

- ❖ The density of carbon monoxide is similar to that of air at room temperature and carbon monoxide generally mixes readily with air. Hence, the effective performance of carbon monoxide detectors or alarms is not generally dependent on mounting height of the device.
- ❖ CO devices may be combined with a smoke detector, if the combination device meets all specified CSFM listing and approval requirements.
- ❖ In the case of rental properties, the tenants must notify the responsible party if the CO device becomes inoperable or deficient. The owner or owner's agent is responsible to correct any reported intolerabilities or deficiencies.
- ❖ For more information, go to 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" or visit your local city/county building department.