

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

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.

The California State Fire Marshal has created this frequently asked questions (FAQ) on carbon monoxide devices to provide the citizens of California with information on this important matter.

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 vehicles that are idling.

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 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 dwelling unit building.

6. Does a duplex qualify as a single family dwelling?

By definition, a duplex is **not** considered a single family dwelling.

7. Where should CO devices be installed in homes?

They should be installed outside each sleeping areas of the home including the basement. The manufacturer's installation instruction should also be followed.

8. Are CO devices that are required by SB-183 to be installed in each room?

No. They are required by SB-183 to be installed outside of each sleeping area. For maximum protection against CO gas, it is recommended that a CO device be installed in each sleeping room.

9. At what height/location should a CO device be mounted?

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 720), the location for effective performance is not generally dependent on mounting height. The density of carbon monoxide is similar to that of air at room temperature, and carbon monoxide generally mixes readily with air. The manufacturer's installation instruction should also be followed.

10. Can I replace my existing smoke detector with a carbon monoxide device?

No. By law, both smoke alarms/detectors and carbon monoxide devices are required to be installed in all dwellings. However, a **combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarm/detector** will satisfy both requirements.

11. 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 alarm (CSFM category # 7256 or 7257).

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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 prior to sale, marketing, or distribution. Existing CO devices installed prior to July 1, 2011 may continue to be utilized.

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

Copies of CSFM listing of CO devices can be found on the State Fire Marshal website by logging on the following:

<http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/strucfireengineer/pdf/bml/CSFM%20listed%20carbon%20monoxide%20devices.pdf>

16. 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".

17. Who can we contact for additional information?

For CSFM approval and listing of CO devices, contact Deputy Mike Tanaka at (916)445-8533 or mike.tanaka@fire.ca.gov . For other questions, contact your local enforcing agencies.