



Carbon Monoxide (CO) and CO Alarm Q & A

With the new regulations announced by the Ontario Fire Marshal and Emergency Management, many residents have questions about the new rules, alarms and CO in general. Here is a basic Frequently Asked Questions sheet on CO and CO Alarms. If you still have questions, please contact the Perth East Fire Department at 519-595-2800 or by email at bhunter@pertheast.ca.

QUESTION 1:

“What is CO and what makes it dangerous enough to require alarm protection?”

ANSWER: Carbon Monoxide, or CO, is known as the “Silent Killer” because it is an invisible, tasteless and odourless gas that can be deadly. Early symptoms of CO poisoning include headache, nausea and fatigue and are often mistaken for the flu. CO is known to disorient its victims and often strikes when people are sleeping. Prolonged exposure to carbon monoxide can lead to brain damage and death.

QUESTION 2:

“Why do I need to install CO alarms in my home? Aren’t CO incidents rare?”

ANSWER: CO is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in North America. Each year it proves fatal for dozens of Canadians, and, makes many more thousands sick with what they think is the flu. Since you cannot see, taste or smell Carbon Monoxide, it is imperative to have working CO alarms.

QUESTION 3:

“What are the sources of CO?”

ANSWER: Appliances that use gas, oil, wood, coal or any other kind of fossil fuel produce carbon monoxide during combustion. Sources of CO in your home can include your furnace, water heater, wood stove, fireplace, oven and of course automotive exhaust. Normally these appliances are vented outside, but if there is a leak or poor installation or insufficient ventilation, tragedy looms.

QUESTION 4:

“How do I find out about the requirements of the law, when I have to be compliant and where the alarms need to be installed?”

ANSWER: View the Ministry’s [CO Alarm Questions & Answers document](#) to read about Carbon Monoxide, how CO alarms work, when & where alarms should be installed, whose responsibility it is to ensure alarms are installed, and information on the replacement, testing and enforcement of CO alarms.

QUESTION 5:

“When does this law apply to my home?”

ANSWER: The CO alarm regulation came into force on October 15, 2014. Buildings with six suites of residential occupancy or less are required to comply with the installation and replacement requirements within 6 months of the in-force date (April 15, 2015, at the latest).

Buildings with more than six suites of residential occupancy are required to comply with the installation and replacement requirements by October 15, 2015.

The maintenance and testing requirements for existing CO alarms (e.g. those devices previously installed to comply with the OBC or a municipal by-law) take effect on the in-force date (October 15, 2014).