

# **Frequently Asked Questions about new Carbon Monoxide Detector Requirements for Rental Properties**

## **Who needs to comply?**

This new state law requires rental properties (single or multifamily dwellings) that use fuel-fired heaters or appliances or fireplaces or attached garage to be equipped with a CO detector. Carbon monoxide is produced by the incomplete burn of a fossil fuel.

## **By what date do I need to comply?**

The law states that an existing dwelling unit that is used for rental purposes that has a change in tenant occupancy on or after July 1, 2009 will be subject to the requirements of this law. This means that when a tenant begins a new lease in a unit; CO detectors will need to be installed before they move in. If you have units that are currently occupied, you are not required to install CO alarms in that unit until a new tenant signs a lease and moves into the unit. The law also requires that a landlord provide any batteries necessary to make the CO alarm operational at the time a tenant moves into a unit.

## **Do I need to replace the detector when a tenant moves out?**

When a tenant moves out the law requires that any carbon monoxide detectors that were stolen, removed, missing, or inoperable should be replaced before the new tenant moves into the unit.

## **What kind of detector does the law require?**

Carbon monoxide detectors must produce an audible alarm and be listed by a nationally recognized certified laboratory. They must also be either battery powered, plug into an electrical outlet with battery back up, be wired into a dwelling's electrical system with battery back up, or connected to an electrical system via an electrical panel.

## **Can the CO detector be combined with a smoke detector?**

Yes. The Co detector may be combined with a smoke detector as long as the audible signal clearly differentiates between the two hazards.

## **What are the requirements of installation?**

The CO detector must be installed directly into the unit's electrical system or directly plugged into an electrical outlet without a switch other than the circuit breaker OR if the alarm is battery back-up, attached to the wall or ceiling of the unit in accordance to the National Fire Association's (NFPA) Standard 720 which is available from the NFPA or any successor standard.

### **How many carbon monoxide detectors need to be installed in each dwelling unit?**

The law requires that a CO detector be installed within 15 feet of each sleeping room in a dwelling unit (or in a location as specified in any building code adopted by the state or any local government entity).

In addition, as long as there is a centralized alarm system or other mechanism for a responsible person to hear the alarm at all times (and able to alert tenants), a carbon monoxide alarm can be installed within twenty-five feet of any fuel-fired heater, or appliance, boiler, fireplace, or garage in addition to placement of detectors within the required 15 feet of each sleeping room.

### **What kind of maintenance does the act require?**

The landlord is responsible for the maintenance of a detector when they are notified in writing by a tenant that the batteries need to be replaced in the detector, or the detector was stolen, removed, found missing, or found not operational.

It may be prudent to inform your tenants of their responsibilities in communicating with the landlord should a problem occur with their detector. In addition, the law states that it is illegal to remove the batteries from the detector unless you are changing the batteries, inspecting or maintaining the alarm.