CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM RULES

EXISTING CARE OCCUPANCY BUILDINGS

Attention Care Occupancy Building Owners & Operators,

New Safety Requirements Starting January 1, 2026

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an invisible, odourless, and deadly gas. To ensure the safety of residents in vulnerable occupancies, **new rules are coming into effect on January 1, 2026,** that establish where CO alarms must be placed in buildings containing Care Occupancies.

Where Do the New Requirements Apply?

The new requirements apply to buildings that contain Care Occupancies as defined in the Fire Code. These are facilities for residents who require special care and need assistance to evacuate in an emergency. These facilities include, but are not limited to:

- Convalescent Homes
- Certain Group Homes
- Residential Care Facilities
- *And similar types of buildings.*

Where Must CO Alarms Be Installed?

CO alarms will be mandatory in both the individual resident suites and common areas of the building.

1. Inside Individual Care Occupancy Suites

A CO alarm must be installed in a resident suite if any of the following conditions apply:

- The suite itself contains a fuel-burning appliance (like a furnace or water heater) or a fireplace.
- The suite is located directly above, below, or beside a service room.
- The suite is located directly above, below, or beside a garage.
- The suite is heated by air coming from a fuel-burning appliance that is *not* contained within the suite (e.g., heat from a furnace in a central service room).

Placement within the suite:

- Adjacent to each sleeping area (e.g.: near all bedrooms).
- On every storey (floor) of the suite, including storeys that do not have a sleeping area.

2. Service Rooms and Common Areas of the Building

- A CO alarm must be installed in each service room or area of the building that contains a fuel-burning appliance.

Buying and Installing Your CO Alarms

Buying

- CO alarms should have the logo of a recognized standards testing agency to ensure they meet Canadian performance standards. Some examples of recognized standards testing agencies and their logos include:
    - Canadian Standards Association (CSA)
    - Underwriters Laboratories of Canada (ULC)
    - Intertek (ETL)
- Under the Fire Code, carbon monoxide alarms are permitted to be:
    - Hardwired (connected directly to an electrical system).
    - Battery-operated (portable or permanently mounted).
    - Plug-in devices (plugs into a standard electrical outlet).
- Many devices on the market are combined units that include both a smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm in one device.

Installing

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation and placement of CO alarms.

Maintenance

Carbon monoxide alarms must be maintained in operating condition and replaced according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Need Clarification?

For specific questions regarding the CO alarm requirements that may apply to your care occupancy, operators and administrators are advised to contact their local fire department. The local fire department is the authority responsible for enforcing the Fire Code in your area.

- Installation requirements are outlined in Section 2.16 of Division B of the Fire Code (O. Reg. 213/07).
- Maintenance requirements are outlined in Subsection 6.3.4. of Division B of the Fire Code (O. Reg. 213/07).