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Carbon Monoxide Detector in Existing Residential Structures

According to national statistics from the Centers for Disease Control, carbon monoxide (CO) kills more than 500 people and accounts for an estimated 20,000 emergency department visits annually in the United States. Washington State experienced the dire effects of carbon monoxide poisoning after powerful wind storms struck Washington in December 2006. It is estimated that over 1,000 people in our State were seen at hospital emergency rooms with symptoms of CO poisoning, and eight people reportedly died of CO exposure.

In accordance with State law, existing residential structures must be equipped with carbon monoxide alarms no later than **January 1, 2013**.

Exceptions:

1. Owner-occupied single-family residences are exempt from this requirement except upon sale. At that time, the seller must equip the residence with carbon monoxide alarms before the buyer or any other person may legally occupy the residence.
2. Motels, hotels, college dormitories and DSHS licensed boarding homes and residential treatment facilities may install a common area carbon monoxide system¹ when certain conditions are met. Contact your local Building or Fire Department for additional information.

Maintenance

The maintenance of a carbon monoxide alarm in rental units, including the replacement of batteries, is the responsibility of the tenant, who shall maintain the alarm as specified by the manufacturer.

Required locations:

1. Outside of each separate dwelling unit sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms.
2. On every occupiable level of a dwelling unit, including basements but excluding attics and crawl spaces.

Each alarm or detector shall be located as specified in the manufacturer's published instructions that accompany the unit.

Power Supply: In existing structures carbon monoxide alarms may be battery operated, plug-in, or hard wired.

Combination Detectors: A single smoke/carbon monoxide detector located in each of the required locations is permitted.

All Carbon Monoxide Detectors must be listed (UL Standard 2034)

References: RCW 19.27.530; WAC 51-51-0315, WAC 51-54-4603.8, NFPA 720 & UL 2034

¹A carbon monoxide system includes carbon monoxide detectors and audible notification appliances, installed and maintained in accordance with International Fire Code Section 908.7 and NFPA Standard 720. Carbon monoxide detectors used in this system shall comply with UL Standard 2075.