



CARBON MONOXIDE SAFETY INFORMATION

Carbon monoxide (CO) is known as the silent killer because it is an invisible, tasteless and odourless gas that can be deadly.

CO is produced when fuels such as propane, gasoline, natural gas, heating oil or wood do not burn completely in fuel-burning appliances and devices such as furnaces, fireplaces, hot water heaters, stoves, barbeques, portable heaters and generators or vehicles.

Over 80% of CO-related injuries and deaths in Ontario occur in the home. (source: TSSA)

What are the Symptoms of CO Poisoning?

Exposure to CO can cause flu-like symptoms such as headaches, nausea, dizziness, burning eyes, confusion, drowsiness and even loss of consciousness, without the elevated temperature associated with the flu. In severe cases, CO poisoning can cause brain damage and death. The elderly, children and people with heart or respiratory conditions may be particularly sensitive to CO.

CO Alarm Installation Requirements:

The Ontario Fire Code states that carbon monoxide alarms are required in all residential dwelling units that have fuel-burning appliances or attached garages. Fuel-burning appliances include furnaces, hot water heaters, gas or wood fireplaces, portable fuel-burning heaters and generators, barbeques, stoves and vehicles.

If your home or cottage has a fuel-burning appliance or an attached garage, install a carbon monoxide alarm adjacent to each sleeping area. In general, “adjacent to each sleeping area” means the hallway serving, or area outside the sleeping area. For instance, a CO alarm must be installed in the hallway adjacent to multiple bedrooms in a house.

As of January 1, 2026, carbon monoxide alarms are also required to be installed according to manufacturer’s instructions, on every storey of the home even if there are no sleeping areas on that level.

Enforcement:

Failure to install and maintain CO alarms will result in the issuance of a ticket in an amount up to \$360 or a charge being laid under the Provincial Offences Act.

CO alarms that have already been installed must be maintained in accordance with the Ontario Fire Code.



Know the Sound of the CO Alarm:

Your CO alarm sounds different than your smoke alarm. Test both alarms monthly and make sure everyone in your home knows the difference between the two (2) alarm sounds.

Know the difference between the CO alarms' low-battery warning, end of life warning and an emergency alarm – consult the CO alarm manufacturer's instructions.

Keep the manufacturer's instructions that come with the alarm in a readily accessible location. It will provide valuable information regarding the testing procedures to be performed and how often it should be carried out. It also includes information regarding the different alarm sounds and modes and what each of them means. Different manufacturers use different sounds and modes. The typical alarm signal indicating the presence of CO is 4 short beeps followed by 5 seconds of silence, continuously repeated. A solid, continuous alarm often indicates a problem with either the electrical or battery backup power supply.

Carbon monoxide alarms monitor your home 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are designed to provide accurate readings for the life of the alarm. But they don't last forever. In 2009, Underwriters Laboratories (UL), began requiring an end-of-life warning to alert homeowners when their CO alarm has reached the end of its useful life.

When your alarm nears its end of life, it will let you know by beeping 2 times every 30 seconds. Knowing how to identify these sounds and what they mean is essential to keeping your home safe.

Identifying the beep:

- End-of-life warning will occur every 30 seconds
- Replacing the battery WON'T STOP the beep
- The beep will ONLY STOP when the alarm is out of power

Replace your CO alarms before the end-of-life warning. **If you think your CO alarm is nearing its end-of-life, replace it today!**

What to do if the CO Alarm Sounds:

Exposure to CO can cause flu-like symptoms such as headaches, nausea and dizziness, as well as confusion, drowsiness, loss of consciousness and death.

If your CO alarm sounds, **and you or other occupants suffer from symptoms of CO poisoning**, get everyone out of the home immediately. Then call 9-1-1 or your local emergency services number from outside the building.

If your CO alarm sounds, **and no one is suffering from symptoms of CO poisoning**, check to see if the battery needs replacing, or the alarm has reached its "end-of-life" before calling 9-1-1.



Where Do I Put a CO Alarm?

Most manufacturers specify where you should locate their CO alarm. READ THE INSTRUCTIONS as they vary from manufacturer to manufacturer. In general, the best place to put the alarm is where you will hear it while sleeping. CO is roughly the same weight as air and distributes evenly throughout a room, so a detector can be placed at any height in any location, as long as its alarm can be heard. Additional units could be installed in several other locations around the home, such as a child's bedroom. Check the following list before installing:

To avoid both damage to the unit and to reduce false alarms, do not install CO alarms:

- In unheated basements, attics or garages
- In areas of high humidity
- Where they will be exposed to chemical solvents or cleaners, including hair spray, deodorant sprays, etc.
- Near vents, flues or chimneys
- Within 2 m (6ft.) of heating and cooking appliances
- Near forced-or unforced-air ventilation openings
- Within 2 m (6ft.) of corners or areas where natural air circulation is low
- Where they can be damaged, such as an outlet in a high traffic area
- Where directly exposed to the weather

Home Fire Safety Audit Program:

In order to enhance awareness and compliance with life safety requirements, the Township of Tiny Fire and Emergency Services Department is offering a free Home Fire Safety Audit Inspection Service to its residents. For information call 249-388-3576.