

EXPOSING AN INVISIBLE KILLER

Each year in America, unintentional carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning claims more than 500 lives and sends another 5,200 people to hospital emergency rooms for treatment. The USFA and the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) would like you to know that there are simple steps you can take to protect yourself from deadly carbon monoxide fumes.

UNDERSTANDING THE RISK

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless, and toxic gas. Because it is impossible to see, taste or smell the toxic fumes, CO can kill you before you are aware it is in your home. At lower levels of exposure, CO causes mild effects that are often mistaken for the flu. These symptoms include headaches, dizziness, disorientation, nausea and fatigue. The effects of CO exposure can vary greatly from person to person depending on age, overall health and the concentration and length of exposure.

CO gas can come from several sources: gas-fired appliances, charcoal grills, wood-burning furnaces or fireplaces, and motor vehicles.

Everyone is at risk for CO poisoning. Medical experts believe that unborn babies, infants, children, senior citizens, and people with heart or lung problems are at even greater risk for CO poisoning.

PROTECTING YOURSELF & YOUR FAMILY



- Install at least one UL (Underwriters Laboratories) listed carbon monoxide alarm with an audible warning signal near the sleeping areas and outside individual bedrooms. Carbon monoxide alarms measure levels of CO over time and are designed to sound an alarm before an average, healthy adult would experience symptoms. It is very possible that you may not be experiencing symptoms when you hear the alarm. This does not mean that CO is not present.
- Have a qualified professional check all fuel burning appliances, furnaces, venting, and chimney systems at least once a year.
- Never use your range or oven to help heat your home and never use a charcoal grill or hibachi in your home or garage.
- Never keep a car running in a garage. Even if the garage doors are open, normal circulation will not provide enough fresh air to reliably prevent a dangerous buildup of CO.
- When purchasing an existing home, have a qualified technician evaluate the integrity of the heating and cooking systems, as well as the sealed spaces between the garage and house. The presence of a carbon monoxide alarm in your home can save your life in the event of CO buildup.
- *If your CO alarm sounds, always call 9-1-1 and exit the building immediately!*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The information in this pamphlet is provided as a courtesy **and** is for general reference only.

For more information,
www.ACFireRescue.org
Voice: 434.296.5833



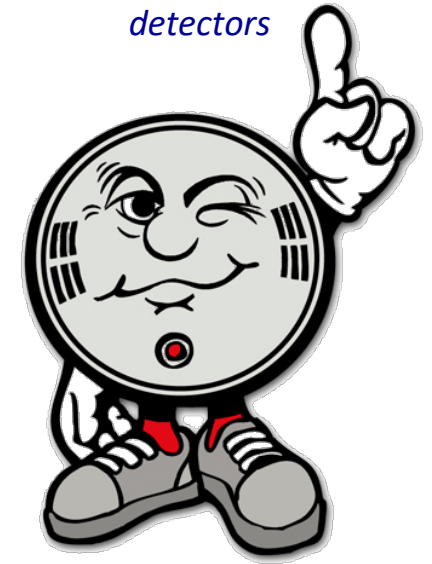
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SMOKE ALARMS

& Carbon Monoxide Detectors

*A basic guide to the types and use of
smoke alarms and carbon monoxide
detectors*



FIRE RESCUE
ALBEMARLE COUNTY

SMOKE ALARMS



PROTECT YOURSELF & YOUR FAMILY

In the event of a fire, properly installed and maintained smoke alarms will provide an early warning alarm to your household. This alarm could save your own life and those of your loved ones by providing the chance to escape.

WHY SHOULD MY HOME HAVE SMOKE ALARMS?

In the event of a fire, a smoke alarm can save your life and those of your loved ones. They are a very important means of preventing house and apartment fire fatalities by providing an early warning signal – so you and your family can escape. Smoke alarms are one of the best safety devices you can buy and install to protect yourself, your family, and your home.

FREE SMOKE ALARM PROGRAM

Free smoke alarms are available to homeowners who may not be able to afford/install detectors on their own. Interested homeowners may contact the Department of Fire Rescue at **434.296.5833** during normal business hours, email ACFRInfo@albemarle.org, or complete an online request at www.ACFireRescue.org

WHAT TYPES OF ALARMS ARE AVAILABLE?

There are many different brands of smoke alarms available on the market but they fall under two basic types: ionization and photoelectric.

- Ionization alarms sound more quickly when a flaming, fast moving fire occurs.
- Photoelectric alarms are quicker at sensing smoldering, smoky fires.

There are also combination smoke alarms that combine ionization and photoelectric into one unit, called dual sensor smoke alarms.

Because both ionization and photoelectric smoke alarms are better at detecting distinctly different yet potentially fatal fires, and because homeowners cannot predict what type of fire might start in a home, the United States Fire Administration (USFA) recommends the installation of both ionization and photoelectric or dual sensor smoke alarms.

In addition to the basic types of alarms, there are alarms made to meet the needs of people with hearing disabilities. These alarms may use strobe lights that flash and/or vibrate to assist in alerting those who are unable to hear standard smoke alarms when they sound.

TO PREVENT NUISANCE ALARMS...

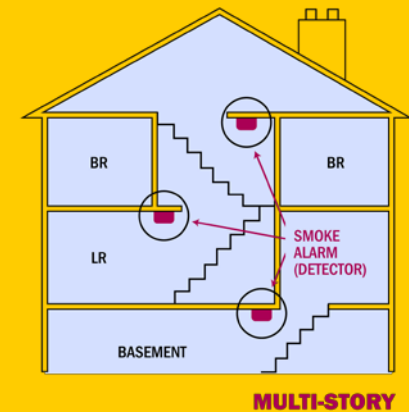
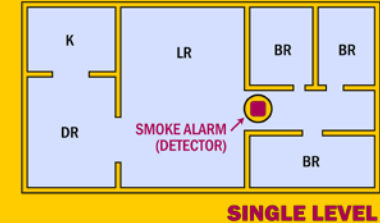
- Clean the alarm following the manufacturer's instructions.
- Move the alarm away from the kitchen or bathroom.
- Get a different type of smoke alarm, like a photoelectric that's less sensitive to common causes of false alarms.
- Choose a smoke alarm that has a silencing feature, so nuisance alarms can be stopped quickly and easily.

KNOW HOW TO ESCAPE

- Plan your escape route and practice leaving your home. Practice **EDITH** (Exit Drills In The Home).
- Decide one place outside where family members should meet.
- Once you're out, stay out!

THE BEST PLACE FOR YOUR SMOKE ALARMS

- outside the bedroom or sleeping areas
- each level in the home
- in each sleeping room



TEST YOUR SMOKE ALARMS MONTHLY AND REPLACE BATTERIES AT LEAST TWICE A YEAR



- Test the batteries in each smoke alarm monthly.
- Replace batteries at least twice annually; the best way to remember to change your batteries is to do so when you change your clocks for Daylight Savings Time or Standard Time.
- You should also replace your batteries when they make a "chirping" sound.