

Area of Study – Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Information provided by Wendy Gifford

Attached is the most recent CPSC death data, for 2001 [the CPSC file is posted as a resource document under the name “ CPSC Data”]. It includes the sources of CO as well. Furnaces are by far the major cause. (Reports for previous years are available at cpsc.gov.)

The Centers for Disease control just released a three year study. According to the Centers for Disease Control: “During 2001--2003, an estimated 15,200 persons with confirmed or possible non--fire-related CO exposure were treated annually in hospital EDs. In addition, during 2001--2002, an average of 480 persons died annually from non--fire-related CO poisoning.” This story also includes a link to sources of CO poisoning, primarily furnaces. The CDC recommends a CO alarm be installed in residences. (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5402a2.htm>)

Note that the CDC data includes non-residential deaths and injuries, however the CPSC data does not include residential deaths caused by automobile exhaust, even when the death was unintentional. Therefore, the residential death number probably is more than the CPSC number, but less than the CDC number.

To answer some of the other questions, there is a product standard for residential CO alarms, ANSI/UL 2034. The product scope is outlined here: <http://ulstandardsinfont.com/scopes/2034.html>. The installation standard is NFPA 720. You can view the details at <http://www.nfpa.org/aboutthecodes/AboutTheCodes.asp?DocNum=720>.

[UL 2034 listed as a “resource document” – copy provided to CTC for committee use only]

There has been an assessment of the number of lives that detectors would save, but I’ll need to dig into my files more deeply to see if I can locate it.

CO alarms are readily available. In addition to Invensys, which makes Firex products, First Alert, Kidde/Nighthawk, and many other companies make the alarms.

The typical thinking is that alarms should be required in homes with a fuel-burning appliance or an attached garage. Mecklenburg County, NC, however, recently revised their ordinance to include ALL houses, as a result of mass poisonings that occurred after a power outage caused residents to turn to portable gas generators. <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Public+Service+and+Information/Newsroom/2004+News/March/monoxide031704.htm>

A further report in the Journal of the American Medical Association can be accessed here: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/291/14/1691>

Below is a list of jurisdictions already requiring CO protection. The specifics vary. Most include residential protection. Some also add hotels, day care centers, or schools, for instance. Please let me know if you would like to see copies of any of these regulations. I have quite a few of them.

Enacted State Wide Carbon Monoxide Laws:

Alaska; New Jersey; New York; Rhode Island; Utah (bldg. code provision); West Virginia; Texas (day care centers and group homes)
Legislatures in ten states have CO bills introduced during this session.

Enacted Municipality Carbon Monoxide Provisions:

Nearly three dozen local jurisdictions across the country require carbon monoxide detection. Requirements vary by location.

Anchorage, AK
Wilmington, DE
Chicago, Frankfort, Gurnee, Lake Forest, Lincolnwood, IL
Linn County, IA
Abington, Marshfield, and Mashpee, MA
Pontiac, MI
St. Louis, MO
Albany, Greenburgh, Kingston, New York City and Rockland and Suffolk Counties, NY
Mecklenburg County, NC
Fort Lee and the Village of South Orange, NJ
Brooklyn, Eastlake, Lakewood, Macedonia, Maple Heights, Northfield, Parma,
Richmond Heights, Westfield Center, and Willowick, OH.
Bellaire, TX
Brown Deer, WI

Mike, I hope this is helpful to the committee. Please let me know if you have questions.

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