
CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) DETECTORS REQUIRED IN RESIDENCES

Iowa law mandates installation of CO detectors in existing homes and new construction

MUSCATINE Iowa – Every home and rental unit must have a carbon monoxide detector installed according to an Iowa law that took effect on July 1, 2018 stipulating that carbon monoxide detectors be placed in existing homes and apartment buildings, and added to any new construction projects.

“Basically, every residence that has fuel-fired heater or appliance, fireplace, or attached garage will be required to have CO detectors,” Mike Hartman, assistant chief for the Muscatine Fire Department, said.

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless, and tasteless gas that is harmful when breathed because it displaces oxygen in the blood and deprives the heart, brain, and other vital organs of oxygen. Carbon monoxide poisoning (breathing in large amounts of CO) can cause serious tissue damage, loss of consciousness, or suffocation in minutes without any warning.

The law defines fuel as “coal, kerosene, oil, fuel gases, or other petroleum products or hydrocarbon products such as wood that emit carbon monoxide as a by-product or combustion.” Fuel gases include natural gas and propane.

Single-family dwellings, single-family rental units, and multiple-unit residential buildings that are under construction or are authorized to start construction on or after July 1, 2018, must have the detector wired into the home. Existing single-family dwells, single-family rental units, and multiple-unit residential buildings can use battery only or plug-in with battery backup.

“Basically, a CO detector is required wherever people live,” Hartman said. “Other occupancies, such as institutions, already have similar requirements and are not covered by this law.”

The CO detector must be placed in the immediate vicinity of every room used for sleeping purposes (and every sleeping unit), each bedroom where a fuel-burning heater or furnace, fuel-burning appliance, or fireplace is located within the bedroom or its attached bathroom, and in the immediate vicinity of each sleeping unit where the unit is not served by a fuel fire device and is not served by a forced-air furnace.

The American Red Cross and the City of Muscatine both have programs that will provide smoke detectors to families who are not able to purchase one. However, there is not a program, as yet, to provide assistance for carbon monoxide detectors.

Muscatine Fire Chief Jerry Ewers said that if donations or funding becomes available carbon monoxide detectors would become available for those who are not able to purchase one.

“Right now there just isn’t any funding available,” Ewers said. “We are always looking for funding sources for programs like this. If donations or funds are received, then we will be able to provide carbon monoxide detectors.”

The Muscatine Fire Department will send staff to residences to help install the devices once the homeowner buys the detector and requests help with installation.

“This is a lifesaving alarm system and we stand ready to assist in the installation if needed,” Ewers said.

Those who need assistance in installing can call the Muscatine Fire Department at (563) 263-9233.



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The [Mayo Clinic](#) states that carbon monoxide poisoning can be particularly dangerous for people who are sleeping or intoxicated. People may have irreversible brain damage or even die before anyone realized there is a problem. Signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are, according to the Mayo Clinic: dull headache, weakness, dizziness, nausea or vomiting, shortness of breath, confusion, blurred vision, or loss of consciousness.

These symptoms represent serious medical conditions and represent a life-threatening medical emergency. Immediate medical help should be sought.

[OSHA Fact Sheet](#)