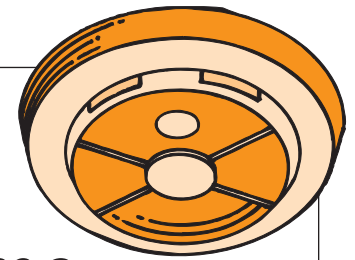


# Be Alarmed!

## *Smoke and CO Alarms at Home*



### Smoke Alarms Save Lives

*Working smoke alarms in your home can double your chances of surviving a fire.*

#### All homes need fire protection.

Massachusetts homes are required to have smoke alarms and most are required to have carbon monoxide alarms.

Place smoke alarms:

- On every level of your home.
- In hallways outside the bedroom.
- At the top of open stairways.
- At the base of cellar stairs.

#### Smoke alarms can't help you if they are missing or don't work. Test and maintain alarms regularly.

- Once a month, vacuum or blow out dust from the alarms.
- Test alarms monthly by pushing the test button.
- If the alarm uses regular batteries, change them at least once a year. An easy way to remember is to change the batteries when you change your clocks. A "chirping" sound indicates that it's time to change the batteries.
- Don't paint smoke alarms!

#### Are Your Smoke Alarms 10 Years Old?

- Replace smoke alarms when they are ten years old. The date of manufacture is stamped on the back of older alarms. It's on the front of newer ones. If an alarm does not have a date or you don't know how old it is, replace it.
- Newer smoke alarms have a 10-year sealed battery that does not need changing. At 10 years, the entire device is replaced.

#### When fire strikes you may have less than one minute to safely get out of the building. When the alarm sounds:

- Leave the building.
- **Get out, Stay out!**
- Go to the family meeting place.
- Call 9-1-1 from outdoors or from a neighbor's home.

#### Plan and practice a home fire escape route.

- Conduct fire drills frequently so actions become automatic behaviors.



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**FireFactors**

Office of the State Fire Marshal • [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs) • (978) 567-3300

# Carbon Monoxide Safety

*Carbon Monoxide (CO) is called the invisible killer because you can't see it, taste it, or smell it.*

## Protect Your Family: Install CO Alarms

- Install carbon monoxide alarms on every level of your home, except in unfinished basements or attics.
- Locate CO alarms near bedrooms so they can wake up sleeping family at night.
- Know the difference between the alarm signal and the low battery alert.
- Test your CO alarms monthly.

## Replace Aging Alarms

- Replace aging CO alarms every 5 -7 years according to directions. Alarms are stamped with the date of manufacture. If an alarm does not have a date, or you don't know how old it is, replace it.
- Newer CO alarms have a 10-year sealed battery that does not need changing. At 10 years, the entire device is replaced.

## Sources of CO:

- *Furnaces and water heaters*
- *Chimneys and woodstoves*
- *Gas and oil fueled space heaters*
- *Blocked furnace and dryer vents*
- *Car tailpipes blocked by snow*
- *Generators*
- *Running vehicles*
- *Barbecue grills and camping stoves*
- *Gas ovens used for heat*
- *Gas tools such as snow removal and yard equipment*

## Carbon Monoxide is:

- *Poisonous*
- *Colorless*
- *Odorless*
- *Tasteless*

## Appliances and CO Safety

If appliances are not working properly or are used incorrectly, dangerous levels of CO can result.

- Have a qualified service technician inspect your appliances yearly, before the heating season.
- Have a licensed professional clean your chimney and check for cracked and broken mortar annually.
- Clear snow from furnace and dryer vents after storms.

## Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning

Exposure to carbon monoxide can produce flu-like symptoms such as:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Fainting

At higher levels, CO exposure can cause unconsciousness and death.

## More Information

For more information on smoke and CO alarms, call your local fire department or visit [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov) and search for Smoke Alarms or CO Alarms.

Test Smoke and CO  
Alarms Monthly