

Carbon Monoxide Detector Placement

Proper placement of a carbon monoxide (CO) detector is important. If you are installing only one CO detector, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recommends it be located near the sleeping area where it can wake you if you are asleep. Additional detectors on every level and in every bedroom of a home provide extra protection against CO poisoning.

Homeowners should remember not to install CO detectors directly above or beside fuel-burning appliances, as appliances may emit a small amount of CO upon start-up. A detector should not be placed within fifteen feet of heating or cooking appliances or in/near very humid areas such as bathrooms. Installation locations vary by manufacturer; be sure to read the provided installation manual for each detector before installing.

When considering where to place a CO detector, keep in mind that although CO is roughly the same weight as air, it may be contained in warm air coming from combustion appliances such as home heating equipment. If this is the case, CO will rise with the warmer air.



The International Association of Fire Chiefs recommends a carbon monoxide detector on every floor of your home, including the basement. A detector should be located within 10 feet of each bedroom door and there should be one near or over any attached garage. Each detector should be replaced every five to six years.

CO detectors do not serve as smoke detectors and vice versa. Smoke detectors detect the smoke generated by flaming or smoldering fires, whereas CO detectors can alarm people about faulty fuel burning devices to prevent CO poisoning. CO is produced from incomplete combustion of fossil fuels. In the home CO can be formed, for example, by open flames, space heaters, water heaters, blocked chimneys or running a car inside a garage.

CO is a colorless, tasteless and odorless gas (unlike smoke from a fire). Detection and prevention of CO poisoning in a home environment is impossible without a CO detector.

For more information, contact Fire Services at 403-938-4066.