Mill Valley Fire Department

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on Carbon Monoxide (CO) Devices

As of July 1, 2011, the Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act (Senate Bill – SB 183) will require all single-family homes with an attached garage or a fossil fuel source to install carbon monoxide alarms within the home by July 1, 2011. Owners of multi-family leased or rental dwellings, such as apartment buildings, have until January 1, 2013 to comply with the law. The Mill Valley Fire Department has created this frequently asked questions (FAQ) on carbon monoxide devices to provide the citizens of our community with information on this important matter.

1. What is Senate Bill No. 183 (SB-183)?
SB-183 is also known as the "Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act" This senate bill requires that a carbon monoxide (CO) detector be installed in all dwelling units intended for human occupancy.

2. What is Carbon Monoxide?
Carbon Monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that is produced from heaters, fireplaces, furnaces, and many types of appliances and cooking devices. It can also be produced by vehicles that are idling.

3. What is the effective date for installing a CO device?
For a single-family dwelling, the effective date is July 1, 2011. For all other dwelling units, the effective date is January 1, 2013.

4. Where can I find a list of all CSFM listed carbon monoxide devices?
Click on the link titled "List of Approved Devices".
http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/strucfireengineer/strucfireengineer_bml.php

5. What is the definition of a dwelling unit?
A dwelling unit is defined as a single-family dwelling, duplex, lodging house, dormitory, hotel, motel, condominium, time-share project, or dwelling unit in a multiple-unit dwelling unit building.

6. Where should CO devices be installed in homes?
They should be installed outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home including the basement. The manufacturer's installation instruction should also be followed.

7. How many types of CO devices are available?
There are three types. 1) Carbon Monoxide alarms (CSFM category # 5276), 2) Carbon Monoxide detectors (CSFM category # 5278), and 3) combination smoke/Carbon Monoxide detector (CSFM category # 7256 or 7257).

8. What is the difference between a carbon monoxide alarm and a carbon monoxide detector?
A carbon monoxide alarm is a stand alone unit which is tested to Underwriters Laboratory (UL) Standard 2034 and has its own built-in power supply and audible device. These units are typically installed in your single family dwelling. A carbon monoxide detector is a system unit which is tested to UL Standard 2075 and is designed to be used with a fire alarm system and receives its power from the fire alarm panel.

9. Are CO devices required to be approved by the State Fire Marshal?
Yes. SB-183 prohibits the marketing, distribution, or sale of devices unless it is approved and listed by the State Fire Marshal.

10. If someone has a CO device that is not listed by the State Fire Marshal prior to the law, can they maintain it or does it have to be replaced?
The law required that CO devices to be approved and listed by the State Fire Marshal. It does not prohibit someone who already owns the device prior to the effective date of Senate Bill (SB) 183.

11. Where can I go to receive further information on Carbon Monoxide?
You may go the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL-FIRE) web site at http://www.fire.ca.gov and click on Carbon Monoxide under "Hot Topics".

12. Who can we contact at Mill Valley Fire Department for additional information?
Questions regarding carbon monoxide devices may be addressed to Mill Valley Fire at fire@cityofmillvalley.org