



The Illinois Carbon Monoxide Law – What does it mean to me?

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Starting January 1st 2007, a new Carbon Monoxide Alarm law takes effect in Illinois. Despite the fact that officials regularly inform the public about the hazards of Carbon Monoxide, many private homes, multi-unit residential buildings and offices still do not have Carbon Monoxide Alarms in place. The new law will hopefully encourage everyone to have a working Carbon Monoxide Alarm in the recommended locations.

What does this law mean to you? Are you in compliance? Let's summarize some of the important points of the law to help you determine your status.

1. The Carbon Monoxide Alarms must comply with the most recent standards of Underwriters Laboratories or Canadian Standard Association. Combination Smoke/Carbon Monoxide Alarms are allowed as long as the unit emits an alarm that clearly differentiates between the smoke or carbon monoxide hazard. The alarms may be battery powered, plug-in with battery back-up, or hardwired with battery back-up.
2. At least one Carbon Monoxide Alarm must be installed within 15 feet of every room used for sleeping purposes within each "dwelling unit." A dwelling unit is any area where people live within a single family home, each apartment within an apartment building, and each living area in a mixed use building.
3. The owner of the structure, building or home is responsible for supplying and installing all required alarms. The owner is also responsible for providing each dwelling unit with written information regarding alarm testing and maintenance. The owner is responsible for ensuring the alarm is in proper working condition (including the battery) when a new tenant inhabits the dwelling unit.
4. The tenant is responsible for testing and providing general maintenance for the alarms, including replacement of batteries. If there are any deficiencies the tenant cannot correct, the tenant must inform the owner in writing of the deficiency.
5. Failure to install or properly maintain each Carbon Monoxide Alarm is a Class B Misdemeanor. Tampering with, removing, destroying, disconnecting, or removing the batteries from any installed Carbon Monoxide Alarm is a Class A misdemeanor on a first conviction and a Class 4 felony in any subsequent conviction.

The only exemptions relate to a residential unit that does not rely on combustion of fossil fuels for heat, ventilation or hot water; is not connected in any way to a garage; and is not

sufficiently close to any ventilated source of carbon monoxide to receive carbon monoxide from that source (only to be determined by the local building commissioner).

Carbon Monoxide Alarms are rather affordable and are easy to obtain. Many hardware stores, home centers and are great sources for Carbon Monoxide Alarms that comply with the 2007 Illinois Carbon Monoxide Law.

Remember that Carbon Monoxide is lethal. Take the time to ensure you have sufficient coverage with Carbon Monoxide alarms. If there is any doubt, install extra alarms. Check that the alarms are in proper working order regularly or at least monthly. Replace batteries at least every six months. With proper coverage using approved Carbon Monoxide Alarms, you can protect yourself, your family and your tenants from this silent killer.

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