



MECKLENBURG COUNTY
Land Use & Environmental Services Agency
Code Enforcement

Memo

Date: December 16, 2011
To: All Customers
From: Jim Bartl, Director of Code Enforcement
Re: Carbon Monoxide Alarm Requirements

The Mecklenburg Building Development Commission recently requested the Department clarify carbon monoxide alarm regulations. Since this involves NC State Building Code regulations, as well as Mecklenburg County's CO Alarm Ordinance, it is valuable to understand the origin of each.

- ❖ Following four Carbon Monoxide (CO) related deaths at Cedar Mill Condominiums, Mecklenburg County established the first CO Alarm ordinance in North Carolina in 2000, further expanding it after the 2003 ice storms.
- ❖ With the NC General Assembly's expansion of the NC Building Code Council's (BCC) authority to regulate CO detectors, the BCC amended the 2009 NC Residential Code, incorporating CO alarm requirements effective January 1, 2011. These Carbon Monoxide (CO) requirements have also been included in the 2012 adopted Codes including the Mechanical Code. At its December 2012 meeting, the BCC revised the CO detectors requirements in both the 2009 Residential Code and the 2012 Codes to apply only to residential construction having a fossil-fuel burning heater, appliance, fireplace, or attached garage.

Consequently, in Mecklenburg County, we now have two different sets of requirements, some applying to new construction while others apply to existing buildings. To clarify for customers, the CO criteria applying to their particular situation, the general requirements are as follows.

- a) All new single family or duplex residential construction having a fossil-fuel burning heater, appliance, fireplace, or attached garage, is covered by section R313.1.1 through R313.1.3 of the NC Residential Code, requiring CO alarms outside each separate sleeping area. The 2009 Residential Code, currently requires the CO alarm to be added in existing dwellings having a fossil-fuel burning heater, appliance, fireplace, or attached garage, where interior alterations, repairs, fuel-fired appliance replacements, or additions requiring a permit occurs, or where one or more sleeping rooms are added or create. The replacement of fuel fired appliances in an existing residence (as described above) requires the alarms regardless of whether or not a "building" permit is issued. After June 1, 2012 the CO alarms will be required for new and existing residences by the 2012 Codes.
- b) The Mecklenburg CO Ordinance requires CO detectors installed per manufacturer recommendations (typically one per level) in;
 - i. Existing single family dwellings
 - ii. New and existing multi-family dwellings
 - iii. New and existing child care facilities

On Monday December 12, 2011 the Building Code Council met in Raleigh and passed a motion to delay the required date for the use of all the NC 2012 Codes except Electrical to June 1, 2012. This change is owed to a delay in the availability of the Residential and Energy Codes, as well as simplifying the test process for the certification of code officials. The 2012 Electrical Code is still awaiting legislative action.

Questions on the above may be directed to Code Enforcement staff in either RTAC (704-432-7822) or CTAC (704-336-3829).