



TOWN OF SOUTHBOROUGH

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

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2025.09.15

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Bulletin No. 2025-01

Purpose:

This bulletin serves to inform contractors, homeowners, and the public of new requirements in the State Building Code; specifically, the 2021 International Residential Code (IRC). These regulations mandate the installation of carbon monoxide alarms during the installation, alteration, or repair of fuel-fired mechanical systems.

IRC 2021 SECTION R315 CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS:

R 315.2 Where required. Carbon monoxide alarms shall be provided in accordance with Sections R315.2.1 and R315.2.2.

R 315.2.2 Alterations, repairs and additions. Where alterations, repairs, or additions requiring a permit occur, the individual dwelling unit shall be equipped with carbon monoxide alarms located as required for new dwellings.

Exceptions:

1. Work involving the exterior surfaces of dwellings, such as the replacement of roofing, siding, or the addition or replacement of windows, doors, or the addition of a porch or deck.
2. Installation, alteration or repairs of plumbing systems.
3. Installation, alteration or repairs of mechanical systems that are not fuel-fired.

R315.6 Power source. Carbon monoxide alarms shall receive their primary power from the building wiring where such wiring is served from a commercial source. Where primary power is interrupted; shall receive power from a battery. Wiring shall be permanent and without a disconnecting switch other than those required for overcurrent protection.

Exceptions:

1. Carbon monoxide alarms shall be permitted to be battery operated where installed in buildings without commercial power.
2. Carbon monoxide alarms installed in accordance with Section R315.2.2 shall be permitted to be battery powered.

Additional Information:

What is Carbon Monoxide? Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless gas produced by the incomplete combustion of fuels such as natural gas, oil, wood, and coal. It can build up in enclosed spaces and lead to poisoning. Carbon monoxide poisoning can cause symptoms ranging from headaches and dizziness to nausea, confusion, and even death.

Why is This Requirement Important? The new requirement to install carbon monoxide alarms helps to protect occupants of residential buildings from the dangers of CO poisoning.

If you have any further questions, please reach out to the Building Commissioner at 508.485.0717 or gnovak@southboroughma.gov.