

One- and two-family dwellings in Wisconsin need smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms

## Carbon Monoxide Alarm Requirements

Carbon monoxide alarms are now allied with smoke alarms - standard safety protection in Wisconsin residences - <a href="#">Read News</a> .	Smoke Alarms - <a href="#">Save Lives and Property</a> - Carbon Monoxide Alarms	<a href="#">Printable PDF</a> of UDC alarm info
You can direct <b>questions</b> to your local building inspector or fire department.	<a href="#">Alarm Installations</a>	<a href="#">Multifamily dwellings</a> also need alarms.

### Carbon monoxide alarms and smoke alarms are required in Wisconsin residences.

There are Wisconsin requirements for both smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms in almost all one- and two-family dwellings, regardless of the building's age. The new carbon monoxide safety net is for dwellings with fuel burning appliances, fireplaces, or attached garages.

#### Owners and Renters Have Responsibilities

Owners are responsible for alarm installations and occupants have responsibility to maintain the alarms. Owners must repair or replace alarms within five days of written notice from an occupant or an inspector. Authorized inspectors may enter dwellings to inspect alarms when requested by owners or occupants. Tampering with alarms is illegal, dangerous, and can cause serious liability concerns.

#### Where and What Kinds?

Alarms must be installed in the basement, and on each floor level. The alarms need not be installed in attics, garages, or storage areas. The alarms may be separate or combination units, powered by batteries, or in the case of new construction, tied into the home's electrical system, interconnected with battery backup. Installation must follow manufacturers' instructions. Those instructions are provided with new alarms and usually can be found on the manufacturers' Web sites. The manufacturer should be identified on the alarm. Alarms used in Wisconsin must be approved by Underwriters Laboratories.

Code language is in SPS 321.09 ([PDF file](#)) and 321.097, Uniform Dwelling Code, and [SPS 328](#), Smoke Detectors and Carbon Monoxide Detectors.

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#### Save lives and property!

Smoke kills more people in residential fires than the flames. Smoke alarms detect the presence of smoke even before you can see it or smell it, especially when flames might not be in your line of sight. (There are alarms for people with visual or auditory disabilities.)

Carbon monoxide is a gas created by incomplete burning of fuels. Carbon monoxide is colorless,

odorless and tasteless, but highly toxic. It can build up over time, with unrecognized symptoms such as headaches, nausea, disorientation, or irritability eventually building to unconsciousness and fatal poisoning. Carbon monoxide alarms warn of the gas before it reaches dangerous levels. Examples of some carbon monoxide sources are garages, heaters, fireplaces, furnaces, appliances or cooking sources using coal, wood, oil, kerosene, or other fuels. Electric appliances are not carbon monoxide sources.

### **Alarms do not guarantee safety**

Alarms must be tested regularly and should have batteries changed at least annually, or when a low-battery warning sounds. The alarms must not be painted over and should be kept clean. Alarms should be replaced when they reach the end of their life span..

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Department of Safety and Professional Services press release

### **CO Detectors Required Statewide**

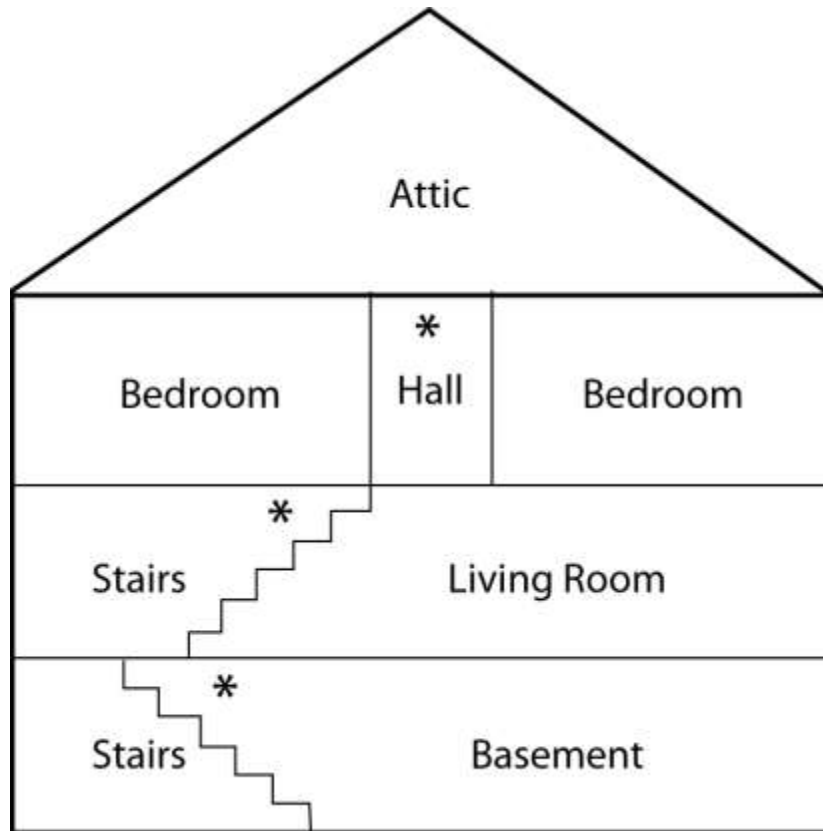
All one- and two-family dwellings are required to install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms to comply with changes in SPS 321 and 328, Wis. Adm. Code. The rule changes are in response to 2009 Act 158, enacted March 10, 2010, and follow a similar requirement for multi-family dwellings.

“According to the American Medical Association, CO poisoning is the leading cause of accidental poisoning in the US,” said the Department of Safety and Professional Services Secretary, Paul Jadin. “CO alarms have shown their effectiveness in alerting occupants to the presence of this poisonous gas.”

One-and two-family dwellings for which a building permit is issued on or after February 1, 2011 require carbon monoxide alarms that are interconnected and directly wired to the dwelling’s electrical service, with a backup battery supply. Existing dwellings may use battery-powered, stand-alone alarms. The alarms must be installed in the basement and on each floor level except the attic or garage. The law applies only to dwellings that contain CO sources. CO sources may include, but are not limited to, garages, heaters, fireplaces, furnaces, appliances or cooking sources using coal, wood, petroleum products, or other fuels emitting CO as a by-product of combustion.

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**Installations must follow manufacturers’ instructions. Those instructions are provided with new alarms and usually can be found on manufacturers’ Web sites. The manufacturer is identified on the alarm. Alarms in Wisconsin must be approved by Underwriters Laboratories.**



**Install a smoke alarm and a carbon monoxide alarm (or combination alarms) in the basement and on each floor except the attic or storage area. See table below for additional requirements.**

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Requirement based on date of building permit or construction	Battery powered permitted	Building Electrical system powered	Building power and battery backup	Inter-connection between alarms	Alarms on every floor level	Alarms outside each sleeping area	Alarms in each bedroom
Smoke alarms in one and two family dwellings before 04-01-1992	x				x		
Smoke alarms in one and two family dwellings after 04-01-1992		x		x	x		
Smoke alarms in one and two family dwellings after 12-01-		x		x	x	x	

1995							
Smoke alarms in one and two family dwellings after 04-01-2001			X	X	X	X	X
Carbon monoxide alarms before 02-01-2011	X*				X		
Carbon monoxide alarms after 02-01-2011			X	X	X	X	
* Battery powered or plug-in							

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### Multifamily buildings

Buildings with more than two residential units also need smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. The installation requirements for those multifamily dwellings are different. Rules for alarms in multifamily dwellings and other public buildings are in the Wisconsin Commercial Building Code, SPS 361-366.

Definition of Multifamily Dwelling from Commercial Building Code, SPS 361.04(14): Multifamily dwelling means an apartment building, rowhouse, town house, condominium or manufactured building, as defined in [s. 101.71\(6\)](#), that does not exceed 60 feet in height or six stories and that consists of three or more attached dwelling units the initial construction of which is begun on or after January 1, 1993. Multifamily dwelling does not include a facility licensed under [ch 50](#).

Carbon monoxide commercial-buildings-with-residential-units brochure, [PDF file](#)

Minimum carbon monoxide alarm locations in multifamily dwellings, [PDF file](#)

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[County Web sites](#) || [City/Town/Village Web sites](#) || [State Portal](#) || [Build Your Business](#)

The Department of Safety and Professional Services, Safety and Buildings Division is an equal opportunity service provider and employer. If you need assistance to access services or need material in an alternate format, please contact us, 608-266-3151, TDD Relay dial 711 in Wisconsin or 800-947-3529.