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256 Second Avenue • Waltham, MA 02451-1139
Tel (781) 890-3700 · Fax (781) 890-4919

E-mail: info@marealtors.com Website: www.marealtor.com

MASSACHUSETTS NEW CARBON MONOXIDE LAW: WHAT HOMEOWNERS NEED TO KNOW

(Information is available for MA Landlords at www.marealtor.com)

On March 31, 2006, all homes in the Commonwealth equipped with fuel burning equipment that produces carbon monoxide or which have indoor parking (a garage) adjacent to living areas will be required to have Carbon Monoxide detectors installed. The law, and the regulations that implement it, apply to ALL homes and not just those that are being sold. Below are some frequently asked questions by homeowners:

What is carbon monoxide (CO) and how is it produced in the home?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas. Appliances fueled with natural gas, liquefied petroleum (LP gas), oil, kerosene, coal, or wood may produce CO. The federal government estimates that over 500 people in the United States die unintentionally every year from CO. Thousands people go to hospital emergency rooms for treatment for CO poisoning.

As a Homeowner in the Commonwealth, what do I need to do to comply with this new law?

Prior to March 31, 2006 you must install a carbon monoxide detector on every level of your home, excluding unfinished basements, attics and crawl spaces. Detectors that are installed on levels of the home which contain sleeping areas must be placed within ten feet of the bedroom door; therefore some homes may require more than one detector on certain levels.

What kind of Carbon Monoxide Detectors must I install in my home & how should I install a Carbon Monoxide Detector?

The law provides a choice to homeowners to install, by March 31, 2006, their choice of either battery operated, plug-in with battery back-up, wireless detectors, a combination smoke/carbon monoxide detector, or hard-wired detectors. These detectors must be in compliance with Underwriter Laboratories (UL) standard 2034. The package the detector is sold in will indicate whether it meets this standard. CO alarms should be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions. *Note: There are specific requirements for combination alarms, before purchasing one please review the requirements of combination alarms with your local fire department.* Like its inspections for smoke detectors, the local fire department is required to inspect each dwelling for compliance with the carbon monoxide law before sale.

We plan to build a new home in 2007, are there additional requirements for new construction? Are there any other laws I should know about?

The state building code will govern additional requirements for new construction. It is believed that it will require hard-wired carbon monoxide detectors for new constructions or for homes who undergo substantial renovations. More information about the state building code may be obtained at [www. http://www.mass.gov/bbrs/code.htm](http://www.mass.gov/bbrs/code.htm). Currently, there are certain plumbing regulations which may require a hard-wired CO detector to be installed with certain appliances. For more information check with the plumber who completes your installation. It is possible that your local city or town might have enacted stricter requirements, therefore you should check with your local fire department.

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