

Fire or Ambulance
DIAL 911



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MEDIA RELEASE

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Carbon Monoxide Detectors to be required in virtually all residences

On August 26, 2009 Amanda's Law was enacted by Gov. Patterson and the NYS Legislature. Named for Amanda Hansen, a 16 year old West Seneca, NY girl who died as a result of a defective boiler while attending a sleep-over at a friend's house in January 2009.

This new law takes effect on February 22, 2010. Prior to Amanda's Law, carbon monoxide detectors were typically only required in new construction. Amanda's Law extends the requirement to virtually all existing residential structures as well.

The new law requires that a carbon monoxide detector be installed in any dwelling where there are appliances or systems that may emit carbon monoxide, or that have an attached garage. This includes single family and multi-family houses, apartments, townhouses, condominiums, hotels, dormitories, bed and breakfasts, group homes, nursing homes and nursery schools. The only exceptions to this law are dwellings that have no carbon monoxide producing devices, and do not have an attached garage. In most single family residences, a single CO detector installed on the lowest story having a sleeping area will comply with the law. If sleeping areas are spaced far apart, additional CO detectors are recommended.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a deadly, colorless, odorless, poisonous gas. It is produced by the incomplete burning of various fuels, including coal, wood, charcoal, oil, gasoline, diesel fuel, kerosene, propane, and natural gas. Products and equipment powered by internal combustion engine-powered equipment such as portable generators, cars, lawn mowers, and other power equipment also produce CO. Electrical devices do not produce CO. High levels of CO can cause death within just a few minutes. A person can be poisoned by a small amount of CO exposure over a longer period of time, or by a large amount of CO over a shorter amount of time. CO detectors are designed to activate for either of these dangerous situations.

Almost 200 people in the United States die every year from CO produced by non-

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automotive consumer products. Still others die from CO produced by non-consumer products, such as cars left running in attached garages. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that several thousand people go to hospital emergency rooms every year to be treated for CO poisoning.

CO enters your body, undetected, through normal breathing. CO poisoning can be confused with the flu. Symptoms include headache, nausea, dizziness, light-headedness or shortness of breath. More severe exposures can result in confusion, loss of coordination, unconsciousness and death.

CO detectors are different from smoke detectors, and each protects you in very different ways. Combination smoke alarms and CO detectors are available. Be sure that everyone in your household knows the difference between the sound of a smoke detector and a CO alarm.

Never ignore a CO detector that is in alarm! It is warning you of a potentially deadly hazard.

If the alarm signal sounds do not try to find the source of the CO:

Immediately move everyone outside to fresh air.

Call 911. Make sure to report if anyone is experiencing any symptoms of CO exposure.

After calling 911, do a head count and verify that all persons are accounted for.

DO NOT reenter the premises until the fire department has given you permission.

If the source of the CO is determined to be a malfunctioning appliance, DO NOT operate that appliance until it has been properly serviced.

Some manufacturers of CO alarms recommend the opening of windows in case the alarm sounds. This practice is generally discouraged by most fire departments as it delays the occupants from exiting the structure, and often makes identifying the source of the CO more difficult to locate.

For additional information, residents should contact either their town building department or the local fire department. DO NOT call 911 for questions about CO alarms.