



July 2017

Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detection Code Requirements Updated

Carbon Monoxide (CO), often referred to as “*the silent killer*,” claims hundreds of lives and sickens thousands of individuals every year. CO is a colorless, odorless, and poisonous gas that results from the incomplete burning of common fuels such as natural gas, oil, wood, or coal. When inhaled, CO enters the bloodstream and reduces the ability of the blood to carry oxygen to vital organs such as the heart and brain. When this happens, the body just goes to sleep and you never wake up! ([Richard Roberts, Honeywell Life Safety](#))

In an effort to reduce non-fire related deaths and injuries, the International Code Council prescribes in the 2012 edition of the International Residential Code (IRC), Section R315 that all new construction homes and all homes that undergo alterations, repairs and additions must comply with the new requirements. Additionally the State of Georgia has amended the IRC code requirements with the following provisions:

R315.1 Carbon Monoxide Alarms. *For new construction, an approved carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed outside of each sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms in dwelling units.*

This means that for all new homes built, a CO alarm must be installed in the immediate vicinity outside the door of a bedroom or any room used for sleeping purposes. This is usually in the hallway outside the bedrooms. This can also be, depending on the floor plan, a living room or other such space adjacent to a bedroom.

Additionally, the IRC specifies that if you have an existing home and you are issued a permit to repair, renovate, or add an addition then the house has to meet the same code requirement as a new house.

R315.3 Where required in existing dwellings. *Where alterations, repairs or additions requiring a permit occurs, or when one or more sleeping rooms are added or created in existing dwellings, the individual dwelling unit shall be equipped with carbon monoxide alarms in accordance with Section R315.1*

Exceptions:

- 1. Work involving the exterior surfaces of the dwellings, such as replacement of roofing or siding, or the addition or replacement of windows or doors, or the addition of a porch or deck, are exempt from the requirements of this section.*
- 2. Installation, alteration or repairs of plumbing or mechanical systems are exempt from the requirements of this section.*

This means if you are issued an interior building or electrical permit then you have to upgrade the existing home to meet the same requirements as a new home. Permits for interior plumbing or mechanical work and permits for all types of exterior work are exempt from this requirement.

Within the State of Georgia, these CO alarms may be either battery or AC powered. The AC powered units are available to plug into a standard receptacle or are connected to an electrical circuit similar to a ceiling or wall mounted AC powered smoke detector. There are also combination smoke and CO alarms so you only need one unit rather than separate smoke detector and CO detector. These are very effective especially when tied to smoke detectors installed in each bedroom and on all levels of the home. The industry experts recommend at a minimum installing a CO alarm on each floor of the house as well as within 5-20 feet of the source of CO such as the water heater and furnace.

Regardless of the method of installation, protect your family and yourself from the Silent Killer by installing a Carbon Monoxide Alarm today. For any questions you are always welcome to contact the City's Building Official at 678.691.1207 or the Building Inspector at 470.395.7027.

*Mike Sargent, Building Official
City of Peachtree Corners*