

# Construction Codes Advisory

Promoting construction of safe, healthy, habitable buildings

## Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Alarms – Multi-Unit Residential Buildings

### Information at a Glance

Effective July 1, 2022, all buildings in Saskatchewan with sleeping rooms are required to provide early warning protection against the effects of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, smoke and fire.

The installation of CO and smoke alarms is the most effective way of accomplishing this requirement for multi-unit residential buildings (MURB) such as condominiums, apartments, motels and hotels.

### Owner Responsibilities for CO Alarms and Smoke Alarms

The owner of each building, or the owner of each suite within a building that contains a sleeping room, is responsible for ensuring the required CO and smoke alarms are installed, maintained and tested in accordance with the requirements below.

In a MURB, CO alarms are required both within suites that contain sleeping rooms and within service rooms as follows:

- inside each MURB suite that has a fuel-burning appliance
- inside each MURB suite that shares a common wall, ceiling or floor with an attached parking garage or a service room.
- inside each MURB service room, if the service room contains a fuel-burning appliance that serves more than one suite.

If CO alarms are required inside of a MURB suite by any point above, the CO alarms must be installed:

- inside each sleeping room, or
- outside each sleeping room within five metres (16 feet) of each sleeping room door.

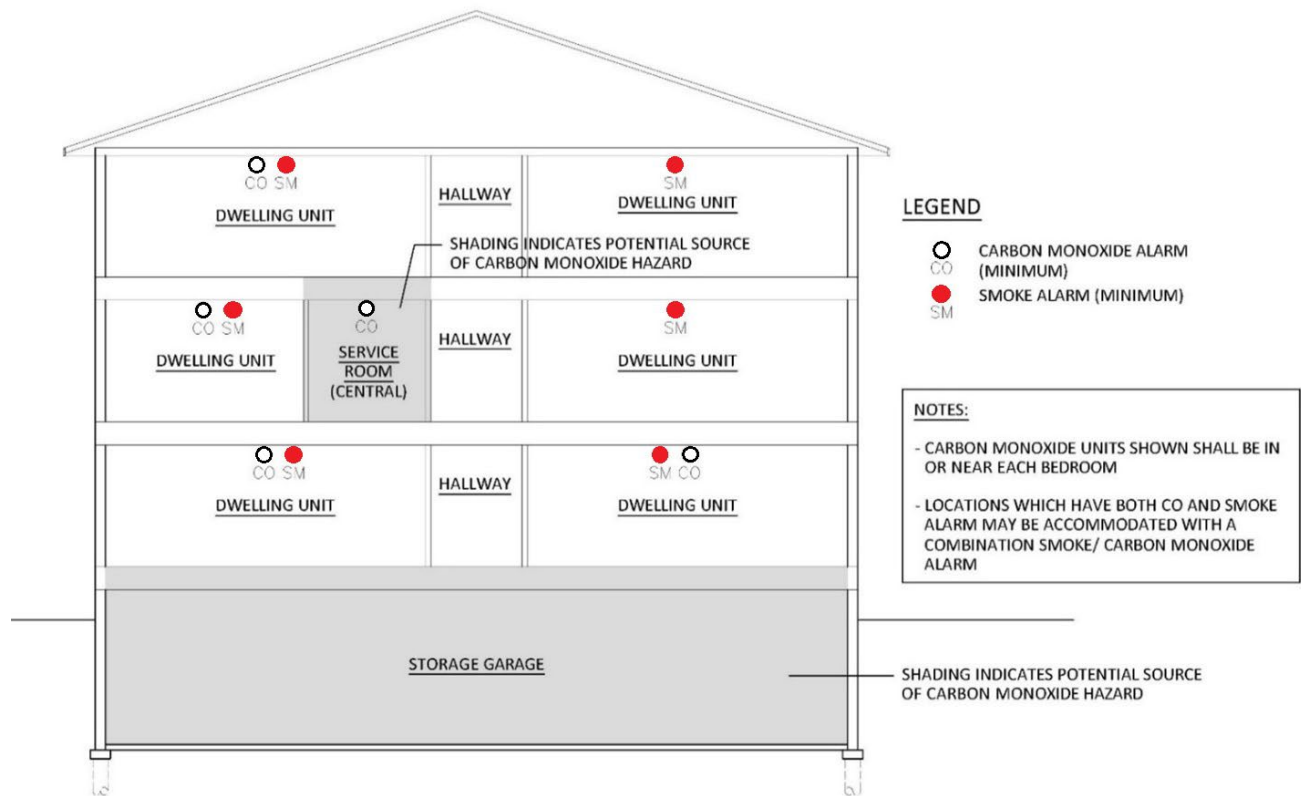
In a MURB, smoke alarms are also required within suites that contain sleeping rooms as follows:

- on each floor level of the suite, including the level with sleeping rooms, with the smoke alarm located between the sleeping rooms and the remainder of the floor, and
- inside each sleeping room.

*(For this advisory, “suite\*\*” means a dwelling unit within an apartment, condominium or MURB and includes guest rooms in motels and hotels. “Fuel-burning appliance\*\*” means boilers, furnaces, fireplaces, water heaters, stoves and other such appliances that burn heating oil, pellets, wood, propane, natural gas and other such fuels.)*

Compliance with *The Construction Codes Act*, Regulations and the National Building Code 2015 (NBC 2015) is addressed in this advisory. Words in italic, other than Act and Regulation titles are defined in the NBC 2015.

# Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Alarms – Multi-Unit Residential Buildings



MURB suite owners with existing CO alarms, smoke alarms and/or combination CO/smoke alarms must replace the existing devices at their expiry dates. If the original expired alarm was hardwired into a normal household electrical connection and was interconnected replacement alarms must also be hardwired and interconnected. A replacement alarm must also have battery backup.

For devices that connect to a normal household electrical connection; a tamper-resistant, non-replaceable 10-year battery is the preferred battery choice when compared to devices that utilize a replaceable battery, such as a 9-volt, AAA, AA, C or D type battery.

Owners installing CO alarms, smoke alarms and/or combination CO/smoke alarms in locations where not previously installed, must only use alarms powered with a tamper-resistant non-replaceable 10-year battery.

All alarms must be fastened at a height recommended by the manufacturer, or in the absence of manufacturer's recommendations, installed on or near the ceiling. All alarms should be tested regularly.

## Definitions

*Suite* means a single room or series of rooms of complementary use, operated under a single tenancy, and includes dwelling units, individual guest rooms in motels, hotels, boarding houses, rooming houses and dormitories as well as individual stores and individual or complementary rooms for *business and personal services occupancies*.

## Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Alarms – Multi-Unit Residential Buildings

When used in this advisory, it does not include application to individual stores and individual or complementary rooms for business and personal services occupancies.

*Appliance* means a device to convert fuel into energy and includes all components, controls, wiring and piping required to be part of the device by the applicable standard referred to in this Code.

### Carbon Monoxide Alarm Questions and Answers

#### What do Saskatchewan residents need to know about carbon monoxide?

CO is an invisible, odourless and tasteless gas that can build up to lethal concentrations in an enclosed space without the occupants being aware of it. CO is commonly produced by malfunctioning fuel-burning appliances or vehicle exhaust. Exposure to CO can cause flu-like symptoms such as headaches, nausea, dizziness and more serious effects such as confusion, drowsiness, loss of consciousness and death.

CO poisoning is a threat to Saskatchewan residents. Between 2018 and 2020, an average of 1,200 CO incidents were reported annually to SaskEnergy. Between 2015 and 2019, the Saskatchewan Coroners Service reported 16 accidental deaths attributed to CO poisoning.

#### What are the common sources of carbon monoxide in a building?

CO forms when a fuel-burning appliance converts fuel to heat. All buildings that have a residential occupancy, and that contain a fuel-burning appliance, and/or an attached vehicle parking garage, must be equipped with CO alarms. This is due to the potential buildup of CO gas due to fuel-burning appliance operation or vehicle exhaust emissions.

#### What types of CO alarms are acceptable?

All CO alarms must conform to CAN/CSA-6.19 “Residential Carbon Monoxide Alarming Devices”.

#### What should an owner do with existing hard-wired and interconnected CO alarms?

Existing hard-wired and interconnected CO alarm systems that contain more than one hard-wired and interconnected CO alarm device must be maintained.

If, on July 1, 2022, an owner’s existing hard-wired and interconnected CO alarm system has alarms that have not exceeded the expiry date listed on the device, then these alarms are permitted to remain until they have reached their expiry date.

If, on July 1, 2022, a CO alarm has reached its expiry date, it must be replaced.

#### What if an owner has existing hard-wired and interconnected CO alarms that are not in all required locations?

The owner will need to install additional CO alarms to meet these requirements.

# Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Alarms – Multi-Unit Residential Buildings

## What if an owner doesn't have any existing CO alarms?

The owner will need to install new CO alarms to meet the requirements. In this case, the new CO alarms do not need to be hard-wired and do not need to be interconnected.

## Smoke Alarm Questions and Answers

### What type of smoke alarms are acceptable?

All smoke alarms must conform to CAN/ULC-S531 "Smoke Alarms".

### What should an owner do with existing hard-wired and interconnected smoke alarms?

Existing hard-wired and interconnected smoke alarm systems, that contain more than one hard-wired and interconnected smoke alarm device must be maintained.

If, on July 1, 2022, an owner's existing hard-wired and interconnected smoke alarm system has smoke alarm devices that do not exceed the expiry date listed on the device, then these alarms are permitted to remain until they have reached their expiry date.

If, on July 1, 2022, a smoke alarm has reached its expiry date, it must be replaced.

### What if an owner has existing hard-wired and interconnected smoke alarms that are not in all required locations?

The owner will need to install additional smoke alarms to meet the requirements. In this case, the additional smoke alarms do not need to be hard-wired and interconnected with the existing system.

### What if an owner doesn't have any existing smoke alarms?

The owner will need to install new smoke alarms to meet the requirements. In this case, the new smoke alarms do not need to be hard-wired and do not need to be interconnected.

### Are combination CO/smoke alarms acceptable?

Yes. Combination CO/smoke alarms can serve a dual purpose of detection and warning for both CO and smoke. They can also provide cost-savings where two separate devices are required, such as outside each sleeping room within five metres (16 feet) of each sleeping room door. Alternatively, combination CO/smoke alarms may be placed in any location that either a CO alarm or smoke alarm is required.

All combination CO/smoke alarms must conform to both CAN/CSA-6.19, "Residential Carbon Monoxide Alarming Devices" and CAN/ULC-S531, "Smoke Alarms".

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Chief Codes Administrator

This advisory is published by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Government Relations for purposes of providing information to users on the topic contained herein. In case of conflict between *The Construction Codes Act* (the CC Act) and Regulations, and the National Building Code of Canada 2015 (NBC 2015) and this advisory, provisions of the CC Act, Regulations and the NBC 2015 shall apply.