

What are the Current Smoke Detector and Carbon Monoxide Detector Laws?

As of January 1, 2013 amendments have been made pertaining to smoke/co detectors. Smoke/Co detector regulations are state laws that every city/town must follow. Rhode Island Life Safety Code, as amended, chapter 24.6.3 for existing residential homes. This life safety code then mandates the following national codes of NFPA 72 (2010 ed.) and NFPA 720 (2012 ed.) be implemented.

General Requirements

Before we get into the home, we look for a clearly visible parcel number which must be physically attached to the house. It must be in the general vicinity of the front door, but not on the door. Houses that are not visible from the roadway must ensure that their house number is clearly visible either on a mailbox, or fixed to a stationary object where the driveway meets the road. They must still maintain a number on the actual house (Narragansett Town Ordinance Chap 10, art. 3, 10-51 + 10-

Home built in 1976 or before shall have smoke detectors outside sleeping areas and on each level to include basements.

Detectors shall be permitted to be battery operated. Carbon monoxide detectors shall be installed outside each sleeping area and shall be permitted to be battery operated.

Homes built on or after January 1, 1977-December 31, 2001 must have hardwired, interconnected, battery backed-up smoke detectors. Detectors shall be located outside sleeping areas and on each level including

basement. Carbon monoxide detectors shall be located installed outside sleeping areas. Carbon monoxide detectors may be battery operated.

Houses Built from January 1, 2002 to February 19, 2004 must have all hardwired, interconnected and battery backed-up smoke detectors located outside sleeping areas and on each level to include basements. Carbon monoxide detectors installed outside sleeping areas and shall be hard-wired with battery back-up and interconnected.

Houses built February 20, 2004 through December 31, 2012 are required to have hardwired battery back-up interconnected smoke detectors in all bedrooms, outside sleeping areas, as well as each level of the house including basements. NFPA 72 (2002 ed.) Carbon monoxide detectors installed outside sleeping areas, and on each level to include basements and shall be hard-wired with battery back-up and interconnected.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

NFPA 720 requires carbon monoxide detectors to be installed centrally outside the sleeping areas, in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms and on each level. Should the bedroom or sleeping areas be separated and the audibility of the occupants is impaired, more than one detector may be required. Sound levels must be 85dBa at 10 feet. There must be a visible power ON light. **Plug-in type detectors are no longer allowed.** Note: call the fire marshal if you have a question as to whether an area would qualify as a sleeping area.

Combination CO and Smoke detectors are allowed. Installation of extra detectors for better coverage is also allowed.

Smoke Detector Requirements

- 1). One smoke detector per floor, unless special circumstances apply.
- 2). Detector placed outside of sleeping area
- 3). Detector near the stairway to upper level
- 4). Detector at the base of the cellar stairs (if ceiling is joisted, then place on bottom of joist.
- 5). House built after 2/20/04 will also have detectors hardwired inside the bedrooms and have a heat detector in attached garages.

Detectors may be battery, hardwired or wireless, in accordance with the for mentioned date ranges. Once a home has a hardwired system in place, it must maintain it regardless of year built. **For three family homes contact the fire marshal for more information.**

Detectors may be mounted either on the ceiling or the wall. THE FIRE DEPARTMENT STRONGLY RECOMMENDS ON THE CEILING AS SMOKE TRAVELS UP THEN OUT. The edge of the ceiling mounted detectors must be at least 4" from the wall. The top of wall-mounted detectors must be between 4" and 12" from the ceiling. All detectors will have a power on light.

No Smoke Detector shall be mounted:

- 1). Inside a Garage
- 2). 10 feet from a cooking appliance
- 3). 3 feet from a forced air register
- 4). 3 feet from the tip of a ceiling fan
- 5). 3 feet from a shower room door
- 6). Detectors mounted within 20 of a cooking appliance SHALL BE of photoelectric design.

Household fire alarm systems are allowed as long as they meet the above requirements and if they perform two functions (burglar & fire), the fire alarm MUST take precedence. Sound must be 85dBa and different from the burglar alarm.

No detector may be over 10 years old (there are dates stamped on the backs of them)

What to do when the smoke detector sounds!

- 1). Know two escape routes from each room and make sure all family members know them also. This should be talked about at a family fire safety meeting and EDITH (exit drills in the home) planning.
- 2). If there is Smoke, CRAWL-stay low and Go! Remember to feel doors for heat BEFORE opening them.
- 3). LEAVE THE HOUSE!
- 4). Have all family members meet at the same place. This should be talked about also at a family fire safety meeting.
- 5). Call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or the neighbor's house.
- 6) DO NOT GO BACK IN TO THE HOUSE! Firefighters would rather respond to a false call, than to an emergency when someone was injured because you went back into the house to investigate or to retrieve belongings.

What to do when the CO detector sounds!

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a gas that is odorless and tasteless. CO is caused by an incomplete combustion of a fuel (gas, oil, wood, etc.) Symptoms of CO poisoning can often be mistaken for the flu, headache, nausea, and drowsiness.

If your CO detector sounds, leave the house and call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or the neighbors house. The Fire Department has gas meters to check the air quality of the house. If CO is found we will ventilate the house and have someone contact your service company to check your fuel burning appliances. If you are having any symptoms, the fire department will transport you to the hospital for a check up. Remember, CO will affect Infants, young children and pregnant women faster and more lethally.

Procedure for a Smoke and CO Detector inspection.

- 1). Visit Narragansett Fire Station #1 at 40 Caswell St. and fill out the appropriate paperwork and then make the appointment for the inspection. There is a \$30.00 fee
- 2). Prior to the inspection, make sure all of your smoke detectors and CO Detectors are properly installed and working.
- 3). Per. Narragansett Town Ordinance chapter 10, Article 3, Section 10-51 and 10-54, All Buildings in the town will display the Street number on the building at the front door. The numbers WILL be at least 3" in height with a corresponding width and WILL be on a contrasting background (dark numbers with light background, light numbers on dark background). If the building front is not visible from the road, a marker with the building number will be at the entrance of the driveway.
- 4). The fire department will arrive and check for the house number and test all smoke and CO detectors for proper functioning.
- 5). **If your smoke detectors are part of your burglar system. You will need a representative from the alarm company there for the test.** The Burglar system shall be tripped first and then the Smoke detectors to make sure the fire alarm is different and takes precedence over the burglar alarm.
- 6). If detectors are hardwired, the fuse/circuit breaker should be marked in electrical panel. If detectors have battery backup, they should be checked with the power off also.
- 7). If any portion of the inspection fails you will have to make another appointment for a re-inspection and be charged a \$60.00 re-inspection fee.

NARRAGANSETT



FIRE DEPARTMENT

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Chief James Cotter

Captain James Given, Fire Marshal

**Smoke/Carbon Monoxide
Detector laws in Rhode Island
for existing 1,2, family homes.**

January 2013