Construction Codes Advisory

Promoting construction of safe, healthy, habitable buildings

Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Alarms – Protecting People in Their Homes

Information at a Glance

On May 5, 2026, Saskatchewan introduced Henry's Law, a regulatory amendment to strengthen requirements for carbon monoxide (CO) detection. Owners of all new and existing *buildings* are required to comply by November 1, 2026, when *The Building Code (Henry Losco) Amendment Regulations, 2026* (Henry's Law) will come into force. This advisory provides information for homeowners and tenants of single-family dwellings, semi-detached and row houses.

Henry's Law expands the locations where CO alarms are required in *buildings.* This change augments regulatory amendments made effective July 1, 2022, that made the installation of CO and *smoke alarms* retroactive in all existing *buildings* in Saskatchewan.

The installation of CO and *smoke alarms* is the most effective way to accomplish early warning protection against the effects of CO poisoning, smoke and fire.

Owner Responsibilities for CO Alarms and Smoke Alarms

All *buildings* that have a *residential occupancy* and that contain a fuel-burning *appliance* and/or an attached vehicle parking garage and/or that contain multiple residential *suites* must be equipped with CO alarms. The *owner* of each *building*, or the *owner* of each *suite* within a *building*, is responsible for ensuring the required CO and *smoke alarms* are installed, maintained and tested in accordance with these requirements.

Placement

In homes, CO alarms shall be installed:

- Inside each sleeping room; **OR**
- Outside each sleeping room within five metres (16 feet) of each sleeping room door; **AND**
- Inside each room that contains a solid-fuel-burning *appliance*.

In homes, *smoke alarms* shall be installed:

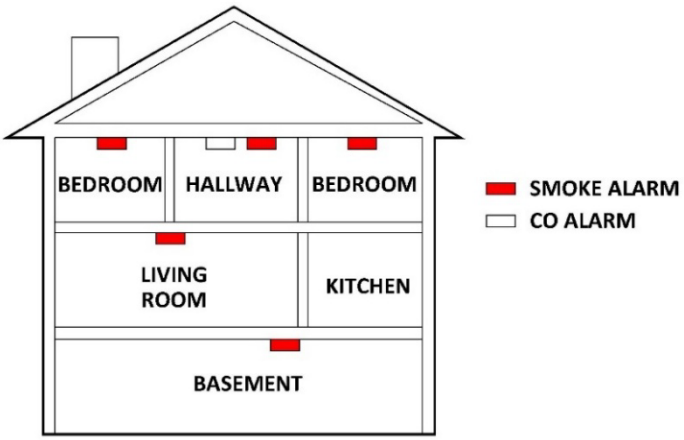
- On each floor level, including the level with sleeping rooms, with the smoke alarm located between the sleeping rooms and the remainder of the floor; **AND**
- Inside each sleeping room.

Compliance with *The Construction Codes Act*, *The Building Code Regulations* and the National Building Code of Canada 2020 (NBC 2020) is addressed in this advisory. Words in italic, other than Act and regulation titles are defined in the NBC 2020.

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

An example house that meets the requirements for CO alarms and smoke alarms is shown below:



Permitted Devices

CO alarms:

- Must conform to CAN/CSA-6.19 "Residential Carbon Monoxide Alarming Devices"
- May be hardwired with a battery backup
- May be plugged in with a battery backup
- May be battery only if equipped with a 10-year tamper-resistant battery

Smoke alarms:

- Must conform to CAN/ULC-S531 "Smoke Alarms"
- May be hardwired with a battery backup
- May be battery only if equipped with a 10-year tamper-resistant battery

In *buildings* complying with the previous National Building Code of Canada requirements for hard-wired CO or *smoke alarms*, those devices must be maintained. The placement of battery-operated devices is only permitted:

- In *buildings* and in locations required under regulatory amendments in 2022 that made their installation retroactive
- Under Henry's Law, which expands placement to all *suites* and units in every residential building

Maintenance

Owners with existing CO alarms, *smoke alarms* and/or combination CO/*smoke alarms* must:

- Replace existing devices at their expiry dates, usually every seven to 10 years.
- Where expired alarms were hardwired and interconnected, replacement alarms must also be hardwired, interconnected and equipped with a battery backup.
- Test all devices on a regular schedule.
- When installing CO alarms, *smoke alarms* and/or combination CO/*smoke alarms* in locations where they were not previously installed, *owners* must only use alarms powered with a tamper-resistant, non-replaceable 10-year battery.

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*. (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.

Questions and Answers

What do Saskatchewan residents need to know about CO?

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.

Why are changes being made?

In December 2025, a boiler malfunction in a residential *building* released CO into the building and Henry Losco, an 11-year-old child, died as a result. Following the determination of the cause, Saskatchewan concluded that provincial CO alarm requirements must be strengthened. It was determined that the former practice of requiring CO alarms in *suites* that shared a wall, ceiling or floor with a parking garage or a *service room* or any *suite* that shared a crawl space or attic space with a *service room*, did not do enough to protect all residents in Saskatchewan.

How will enforcement be managed?

Building owners are required to comply. Building owners who are found to be in non-compliance can be ordered to comply and may be charged.

Local authorities (municipalities) are delegated responsibility for the administration and enforcement of both building and fire codes. Municipalities will determine whether they take a passive or active approach to inspection.

Passive inspection occurs as follows:

- Building officials will examine a *building* for compliance when they have reason to be in a *building* to inspect construction, renovation, *alterations*, additions or complaints.
- Fire inspectors will examine a *building* for compliance when they conduct a fire inspection or respond to an incident or a complaint.

Active inspection occurs if a *building*-by-*building* inspection is initiated following the November 1, 2026, compliance date.

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

CO forms when a fuel-burning *appliance* converts fuel to heat. This includes furnaces, fireplaces, water heaters, gas ranges and clothes dryers. All *buildings* that have a *residential occupancy* and that contain a fuel-burning *appliance* and/or an attached vehicle parking garage and/or that contain multiple residential *suites* must be equipped with CO alarms.

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 when two separate devices are required, such as one outside each sleeping room within 5 metres (16 feet) of each sleeping room door. Alternatively, combination CO/*smoke alarms* may be placed in any location where either a CO alarm or a *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".

Additional Information

For additional information about the application of CO alarm requirements, please see the following Construction Codes Advisories:

- Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Alarms – Multi-Unit Residential Buildings
- Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Alarms – Alternative Family Care Homes, Family Child Care Homes and Caregiver Homes Approved for Children in the Care of the Ministry of Social Services
- Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Alarm Municipal Responsibility