

HOW TO CHOOSE A CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM

Carbon monoxide (CO) is created anytime a fossil fuel (such as gasoline, oil, wood, or propane) is burned, and becomes lethal when common household appliances malfunction or are not properly ventilated. The leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in North America, CO is odorless, tasteless and invisible – it's a silent killer. The only safe way to know if carbon monoxide is present is to install CO alarms on every level of your home and in sleeping areas.

CO alarms are designed to alert the homeowner when carbon monoxide levels have begun to accumulate over a period of time, and will alarm before most people would experience any CO poisoning symptoms. Below are key factors to consider when purchasing a CO alarm:

- **Accuracy:** Look for a statement on the package about the alarm's accuracy level. If the CO alarm is UL listed, then the accuracy statement will have been certified by UL, too.
- **Electrochemical sensor:** Alarms with electrochemical sensors are more stable during humidity and temperature changes and resist reacting to common household chemicals that may cause false readings. Review a product's packaging to determine if the alarm features an electrochemical sensor.
- **UL or CSA Listed:** CO alarms should meet the strict third-party standards set by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or Canadian Standards Association (CSA). A "UL Listed" or "CSA Listed" label should be printed on the product's packaging. Kidde is the only major manufacturer whose CO alarms currently meet the strict standards set forth by both UL and CSA.
- **End-of-life warning:** This feature alerts consumers when it's time to replace the alarm. Kidde is the only major manufacturer that tests its CO alarms for long-term reliability and whose alarms have a built-in end-of-life feature.

The price of CO alarms ranges from \$20–50 depending on the product's features. When purchasing an alarm, look for:

- **Digital Display:** A digital display screen clearly shows the level of CO detected in the home. The reading updates every 15 seconds.
- **Peak-Level Memory:** This feature records the highest level of CO present. Knowing the CO level in the home can help emergency personnel determine treatment for those exposed.
- **Battery Operated:** Consumers who live in areas prone to power outages or who own a gas-powered generator should consider a battery-powered CO alarm with a backlit digital display. Battery-powered units offer 24-hour-a-day CO monitoring, even if electrical power to the home is interrupted. The backlit digital display allows the user to view the CO level in the dark.
- **Plug-in with Battery Backup:** Easy to plug into any electrical socket, these alarms include a 9V battery for protection during short-term power outages.
- **Voice Warning:** This feature clearly announces the CO threat present in the home, in addition to emitting the traditional alarm beep. It is often a feature of combination smoke/CO alarms.

Placement & Maintenance

- Install at least one CO alarm on every floor and in sleeping areas.
- Make sure CO alarms are at least 15 feet away from cooking or heating appliances to prevent false alarms.
- Don't cover or obstruct the unit.
- Test the CO alarm monthly and replace batteries as needed.
- Replace CO alarms every 5 years to benefit from the latest technology upgrades.

###

For more information, contact:

Emily Lauer or Brock Schmaltz

elauer@edwardhoward.com

bschmaltz@edwardhoward.com

216-781-2400