Construction Codes Advisory

Promoting construction of safe, healthy, habitable buildings

Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Alarms – Multi-Unit Residential Buildings

Information at a Glance

On May 5, 2026, Saskatchewan introduced Henry's Law, a regulatory amendment to strengthen requirements for carbon monoxide (CO) detection in multi-unit residential buildings (MURBs). Owners of all new and existing buildings are required to comply by November 1, 2026.

Each suite within a MURB must have at least one CO alarm installed in the suite. This change augments regulatory amendments made in 2022 that made the installation of CO and smoke alarms retroactive in all existing buildings.

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

MURBs include condominiums, apartments, motels, hotels and all other buildings with multiple residential suites.

Owner Responsibilities for CO Alarms and Smoke Alarms

The owner of each building is responsible for ensuring CO and smoke alarms are installed in each residential suite or unit, maintained and tested as required below.

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

Placement

CO alarms shall be:

- Inside each sleeping room; **or**
- Outside each sleeping room within five metres (16 feet) of each sleeping room door.

Smoke alarms shall be:

- Inside each sleeping room; **and**
- On each floor level of the suite, located between the sleeping rooms and the remainder of the floor.

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.

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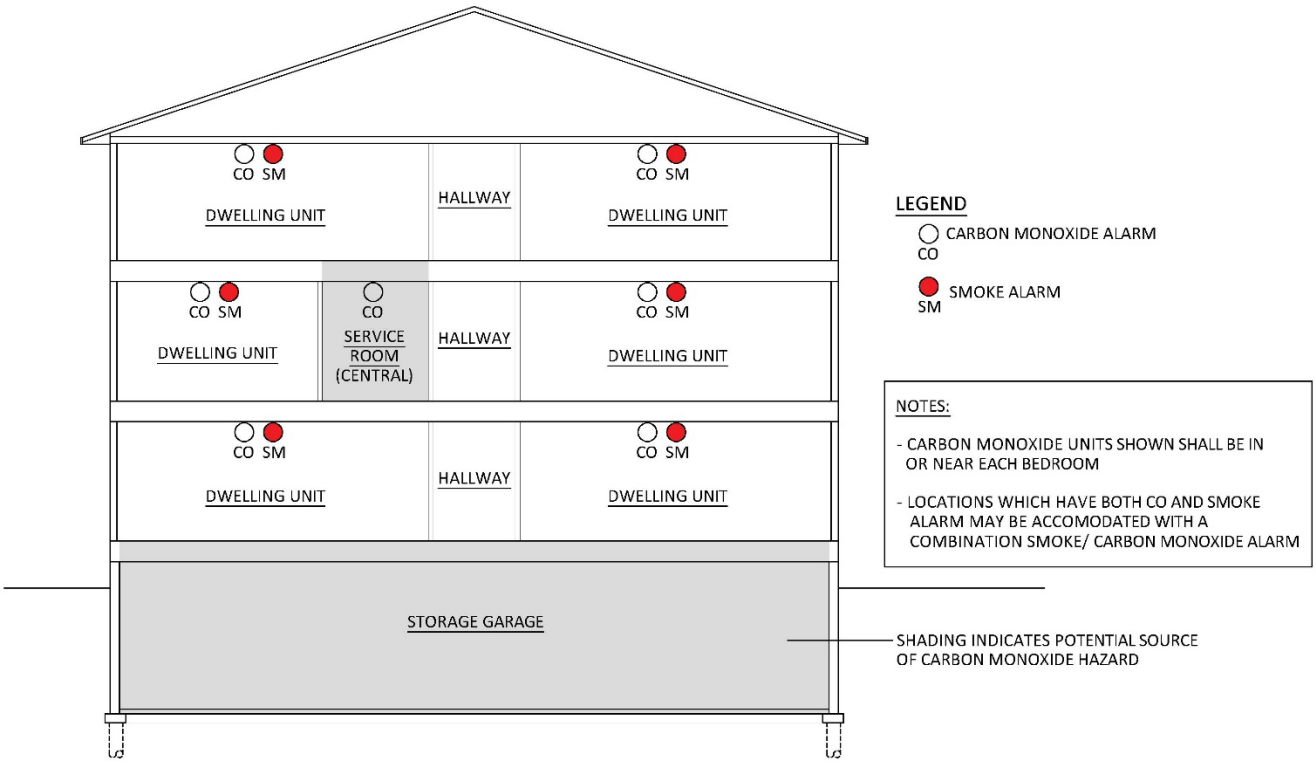

Permitted Devices

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 are 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 MURB.

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Maintenance

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

- Replace the existing devices at their expiry dates, usually 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 and for rental properties keep records of when the devices were tested.

Definitions

For this advisory ***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. (Adapted from the National Building Code of Canada 2020.)

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 MURB released CO into the building and Henry Losco, an 11-year-old child, died as a result. Following the determination of the cause, Saskatchewan determined that the 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 of a MURB.

When is compliance required?

Compliance is required by November 1, 2026. Owners are encouraged to install required devices early to limit risks leading up to the November deadline.

How will enforcement be managed?

Building owners are required to comply.

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, 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.

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

What are the common sources of CO 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.

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 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”.