



SAFE STAY UPDATE: CARBON MONOXIDE CONTROLLING HAZARDS IN HOTELS

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas produced by fuel burning appliances like water heaters, fireplaces, fixed space heating equipment, diesel and emergency generators. Fossil-fueled automobiles can also create exposure when in an enclosed space such as a parking garage. When fuel burning appliances are properly installed and maintained, these sources present extremely low risk. To ensure the safety of guests and employees, hotel operators must follow these best practices:

HOTEL BEST PRACTICES & PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- **AHLA encourages its members to adhere to the fire and mechanical code applicable to their respective jurisdiction.** For example, the International Fire Code generally requires CO sensing capability to be installed in hotel rooms and public spaces containing fireplaces and/or fuel-fired heaters. Back-of-house spaces with gas or fuel-fired equipment with, for example, commercial cooking equipment, water heaters, fireplaces, fixed space heating equipment, diesel fire pumps, and emergency generators likely require CO sensing capability.
- Fuel burning appliances should be inspected yearly and in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations to ensure combustion efficiency, equipment integrity and proper ventilation rates. All inspections and repairs should be conducted by experienced, licensed, and insured contractors.
- At a minimum, CO sensing equipment should be installed in spaces with fuel burning appliances and in immediately attached spaces (sides and above) . A visual inspection of each sensing device should be completed monthly and operational tests should be completed yearly.
- If sensing equipment is found to be inoperative or exceed the manufacturer's recommendation for useful life, it must be replaced immediately. All inspection and testing activity should be fully documented.
- Hotel staff should be familiar with CO monitoring capability, including the location of detectors and the sound of alarms. Staff should be thoroughly trained in all CO emergency procedures.
- Emergency pre-planning exercises with your local emergency response agencies (fire, law enforcement, EMS) can familiarize you and the respective agencies with the hazards associated with your specific facility, building layout and protective systems.
- In the event of activation of a CO alarm, take immediate action. Summon the fire department and evacuate the area. If safe, shutdown the appliance. Many fire departments are equipped with portable CO monitoring capabilities specifically designed to measure CO levels in the air.
- In the circumstance of no CO alarm but one or more building occupants is presenting with unexplained headaches, dizziness and other symptoms, suspect CO and follow emergency procedures.
- The [International Code Council](#), [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#), [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#), [Occupational Safety & Health Administration](#) and [National Fire Protection Association](#), as well as state fire marshals and local building departments have additional useful resources on CO prevention.