

March 2, 2023

**CARBON MONOXIDE DEVICE REQUIREMENT
HCV Owners/Property Managers**

Dear HCV Owners and Property Managers,

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has informed the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) that HUD will be enforcing provisions of the 2018 International Fire Code (IFC) that require Carbon Monoxide (CO) detectors in Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) supported units. Effective **April 1, 2023**, PHA will include CO detectors on the inspection checklist for HCV units.

In order to assist you in meeting this deadline, included in this letter is some general guidance regarding the CO detector requirements and recommended placement within the unit. As owner and/or landlord, you remain responsible for complying with laws and regulations pertaining to the safety of your units.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless and toxic gas. Because it is impossible to see, taste or smell the toxic fumes, CO can kill you before you are aware it is in the home.

You can find the specific requirements of Chapters 9 (915.1 to 915.2.2) and 11 (1103.9) of the 2018 IFC Code at <https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IFC2018>.

Here are some highlights from the IFC Code regarding CO Detectors:

Carbon Monoxide Detectors must be provided in a unit that contains any of the following: a fuel-burning appliance, fuel burning fireplace, or attached private garage with a communicating opening.

Carbon Monoxide Detection must be provided in any room in the unit that contains a fuel-burning appliance or a fuel-burning fireplace (except for the kitchen).

- Fuel-burning appliances would typically be found in basements in houses, or utility closets in apartment units.
- Fuel-burning fireplaces could be found in any dwelling room within the unit.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors must be installed in hallway outside of but in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms. (Only required inside of a bedroom or dwelling room when the room or its attached bathroom contains a fuel-burning appliance or fuel-burning fireplace.)

Carbon Monoxide Detection must be installed in any unit with an attached private garage regardless of whether or not fuel burning appliances or fuel burning fireplaces are present in the unit.

Placement

Any room used as a bedroom should have a carbon monoxide detector installed within 10-15 feet of the door. If two bedroom doors are less than 30 feet apart, one detector is sufficient.

- CO gas leaks are especially common at night when furnaces run frequently to keep your home warm. With a carbon monoxide detector, you eliminate the risk of being exposed to a leak while you sleep, which could be fatal.

If your home has multiple stories, including a basement, make sure at least one carbon monoxide detector is installed on every level.

- Dangerous carbon monoxide buildup is often trapped on a single floor of your home. The main living and sleeping areas upstairs may be just fine, but if the furnace or water heater in the basement starts malfunctioning, a release of CO gas here could make going downstairs a deadly trap.

The best height to mount carbon monoxide detectors is on the wall a few feet from the ceiling. Models with digital readouts are best placed at eye level. Combination Smoke/CO Detectors should be placed either on the wall 6-12 inches from the ceiling, or on the ceiling at least 6 inches from the wall. **(Same placement as smoke detectors)**

- Carbon monoxide weighs about the same as air, but it's often carried upward in hot air produced by combustion appliances. Detectors near, but not on, the ceiling are best to catch this rising air as quickly as possible. Digital readout models are simply easier to read when placed at eye level.

Sincerely,

Housing Choice Voucher Program
HCV Inspections
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