



## Town of Lexington Fire Department

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### **General Residential Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detector Requirements** (rev 6/5/12)

Massachusetts State Law<sup>i</sup> requires smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to be located in all residential dwellings. To ensure compliance, all dwellings must be inspected by the fire department upon the sale or transfer of the property. The following are general requirements for the placement of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and inspection guidelines. Read these requirements first, but if you have any questions, or your home is unique, you may call the Fire Prevention Office for assistance.

#### **Smoke Detectors**

Homes that have been built before January 1, 1975 shall use dual technology (ionization/photoelectric) smoke detectors that can be battery powered. The sole exception is for smoke detectors installed within 20-feet of the entry to a kitchen or bathroom must use only photoelectric technology to avoid nuisance alarms. All homes built (or substantially renovated) after 1975 require interconnected primary power (hardwired) smoke detectors. If hardwired interconnected smoke detectors are installed, all detectors must alarm if one is activated.

In all homes a smoke detector must be located on each level of the dwelling, including the basement, and outside each separate sleeping area. In most cases a smoke detector must be installed on the ceiling of each stairway leading to the floor above, near the base of, but not within each stairway. Homes built from 1997 to 2007 may have a smoke detector located on each level, but not necessarily near the base of the stairs.<sup>ii</sup>

#### **Carbon Monoxide Detectors**

Generally speaking anyone who owns residential property that contains fossil fuel burning equipment (i.e., oil, gas, wood, coal, etc.) or contains enclosed parking (attached or enclosed garage) is required to install Carbon Monoxide (CO) alarms.

There are several types of alarms that are allowed; they include: battery powered; plug-in (AC Powered) units with battery backup; primary powered (hardwired) with battery backup; low voltage or wireless alarms; and combination smoke detectors and CO alarms which, must provide a verbal warning in addition to the alarm.

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Carbon monoxide alarms are required to be located on every level of the dwelling including the basement and attic (if habitable). On levels including sleeping areas a CO alarm must be placed within ten (10) feet of any bedroom door.

### **New construction and renovations including adding or creating a bedroom**

All new construction and remodeled homes will have building plans reviewed by the fire department as part of the building permit process. Smoke, CO and heat detectors will be required according to the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the *MA State Building Code for One and Two Family Homes*.

These homes will be inspected for compliance by the fire prevention inspector outside of normal smoke and CO detector inspections times. The fee for an inspection for building permit Certificate of Occupancy is \$50.00.

### **Scheduling a Smoke and CO Detector Inspection for the Sale of a Home**

The Lexington Fire Department schedules Smoke and CO detector inspections every weekday from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. As there are a limited number of inspections each week, we strongly recommend you call for an inspection at least two weeks before it is needed. However, the certificates of compliance are valid for 60-days, so you may schedule an inspection well in advance. It the homeowners responsibility to verify the proper location, type and operation of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors BEFORE the fire department inspection. If your home fails the inspection, and you have not scheduled far enough in advance, we may not be able to re-inspect in a timely manner. The fee for the inspection is \$50.00. An additional \$50.00 fee will be charged for any re-inspection.

### **House Numbers**

Every building shall have affixed a number representing the address of such building<sup>iii</sup>. The number shall be of a nature, size and situated on the building so it is visible from the street or road providing vehicular access to such building. The fire department will inspect for compliance with this law during all inspections.

**Call the Fire Prevention office at (781) 862-0272 x121 between the hours of 8:30 am -12:30 pm Monday - Friday to schedule a smoke/CO detector inspection for the sale of a home or new construction/renovation Certificate of Occupancy.**

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<sup>i</sup> Chapter 148 MA General Laws Fire Prevention: Section 26E. Residential buildings or structures; installation of smoke detectors; Section 26F Residential buildings to be equipped with smoke detectors upon sale and transfer; Section 26F ½ Carbon Monoxide Alarms Required in certain residential structures; regulations; inspections; enforcement.

<sup>ii</sup> Homes built from 1997 – 2007 fall under the 6<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Massachusetts Building Code. During that period the code deleted the words ‘near the base of (stairs)’, however if your smoke detector is located at the base of the stairs or elsewhere on the same level it is a proper installation for that period.

<sup>iii</sup> Chapter 148 MA General Laws Fire Prevention: Section 59. Display of street address number on buildings.