

New Carbon Monoxide Alarm Requirements – Effective January 1, 2026

Ontario has updated the Ontario Fire Code to strengthen carbon monoxide (CO) safety in residential buildings. These changes take effect January 1, 2026.

Who Must Have Carbon Monoxide Alarms?

You are required to install carbon monoxide alarms if your home or building contains any source of CO, including:

- A fuel-burning appliance(oil/propane/natural gas furnace, gas stove, gas water heater, wood stove, pellet stove, boiler, etc.)
- A fireplace (wood, gas, pellet)
- An attached garage or carport
- A fuel-burning appliance in a service room (for multi-unit buildings)

Homes NOT required to have CO alarms: Homes with no fuel-burning appliances, no fireplace, and no attached garage (e.g., fully electric homes)

What's Changing January 1, 2026?

Previous requirement:

- CO alarms were required near sleeping areas only.

New requirement:

If your home has a CO source, you must have:

- A CO alarm on every level of the home, including basements and any storey without bedrooms
- CO alarms near all sleeping areas (unchanged)

This applies to:

- Detached homes
- Semi-detached & townhomes
- Cottages & seasonal dwellings (if they have a CO source)
- Multi-unit residential buildings
- Rental properties

Installation Tips

- Install alarms outside bedrooms, and now on each floor as per the updated regulation.
- Do not install CO alarms too close to fuel-burning appliances to avoid nuisance alarms.
- Follow manufacturers' instructions for mounting height and placement.

Maintenance Requirements

To keep your alarms working properly:

- Test monthly
- Replace batteries at least once per year (or as required)
- Replace the entire alarm when it reaches end-of-life (typically 7–10 years)
- Keep vents and chimneys clear and have heating appliances serviced annually by a qualified technician

Landlords & Multi-Unit Buildings

Landlords are responsible for:

- Installing CO alarms where required
- Maintaining and replacing alarms
- Ensuring alarms are functional at the start of each tenancy

Tenants are responsible for:

- Testing alarms monthly
- Reporting any issues or low-battery alerts immediately

Why These Changes Matter

Carbon monoxide is:

- Colourless
- Odourless
- Deadly without warning

CO alarms are the only way to detect unsafe levels in your home.

These expanded requirements provide earlier warning, improving safety for residents and first responders.

Questions?

Residents may contact:

Echo Bay Fire Department
Matt Jarrell
Fire Chief
705-248-2211
echobayfire@gmail.com