



# Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detectors

## Why CO Detectors?

Carbon monoxide is one of the leading causes of poisoning in humans. Because it is odorless, tasteless, and colorless, it is difficult to notice, making it even more dangerous. CO detectors will sound an alarm when levels become unhealthy, warning inhabitants to seek fresh air. Some models also have digital displays that constantly show the amount of CO in the air, measured in parts per million (ppm).

## CO Detector Standards:

Carbon monoxide detector standards are regulated by UL 2034 of the Underwriters Laboratories. CO detectors do not alarm when exposed to long-term low levels or short-term jumps in CO levels. UL 2034 mandates that CO detector alarm must sound when exposed to 70ppm of CO for three hours.<sup>1</sup>

## CO Detector Placement:

CO detectors should be placed on every floor and within 15 feet of all sleeping spaces. Detectors should not be mounted above or near fuel-burning appliances that may emit trace amounts of CO. Also, do not install detectors in overly humid locations such as bathrooms. Keep detectors at least 15 feet from appliances and bathrooms.

## If Your CO Detector Alarm Sounds:

If the alarm sounds, immediately turn off all appliances and other sources of combustion. Open windows and doors to air out the building. Contact a trained professional to assess the situation and fix the problem before restarting any appliances.

If anyone becomes ill with headaches, dizziness, or vomiting, call the fire department and go outside for fresh air. Do not re-enter the building until it has been aired out and the problem is addressed.

<sup>1</sup>Underwriters Laboratories (2001), "UL 2034," p. 35.