

FAQ about Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detectors

Where is the proper place to install my residential Carbon Monoxide (CO) detectors?

It is recommend you place CO alarms near the sleeping areas, and on each level of the home. A good rule of thumb for the number and placement of CO alarms for your particular home is to place CO alarms near smoke and fire alarms that have been installed to meet current building code requirements in your area. Do not place CO alarms in the furnace room, kitchen or garage as these locations could lead to nuisance alarms.

Is one unit enough for my home and if not how many should I have?

Generally, one detector can be adequate for 1,200 to 1,500 square feet of living space. The most important determination for the number of CO alarms needed is whether an alarm can be heard in all sleeping areas. If you install only one CO alarm in your home, install the detector near bedrooms, not in the basement or furnace room.

At what height should I install my CO alarm?

For ease of viewing the visual indicators, (digital displays or alarm lights), it is recommended to place the CO alarm at eye level or above. Do not place the CO alarm in "dead air" spaces (no closer than 6" from the ceiling or floor) or turbulent air spaces such as by an open window, door or by a ceiling fan.

Is CO heavier or lighter than air.

CO is slightly lighter than air and as it begins to rise, it mixes with surrounding air and diffuses throughout the house.

I am reading low levels on my CO alarm, what does this mean, and how can I determine where the CO is coming from?

Low Level readings may be caused by a number of things. Starting a car in an attached garage, a fuel burning appliance emitting a short burst of CO at start up, temperature inversions, even cigarette smoke can and will generate low level carbon monoxide readings on your CO alarm. Other reasons for low level readings may be the introduction of gases from household products, such as alcohol based cleaning solutions, paints, stains, aerosols and even gases from a diaper pail.

If the detector appears to be functioning properly, ventilate your home and turn off all fuel burning appliances. After ventilating the area make sure that no contaminant gases (aerosols, paints, solvents, etc.) are present. If so, remove the source of contamination and monitor the readings. If the detector is still displaying low levels. Check to see if a car was started in an attached garage, or an appliance has been turned on (furnace, water heater, stove, etc.). If so, monitor the displayed readings with this appliance turned on and off. If low level readings are continuously observed, contact a qualified technician to inspect your home for the source of CO. Do not ignore any reading your detector may display, low concentrations of CO can be just as dangerous over time as high concentrations

Can I put the detector on an extension cord, turn it upside down, or lay it down on a table?

Plugging the CO alarm into an extension cord will have no adverse effect on the operation of the CO alarm. Placing the detector upside down, laying the detector on its back or even mounting the detector on a ceiling will not harm the detector but it may have an adverse effect on the sensitivity and accuracy of the displayed reading due to the air flow through the unit. It is recommended that you follow the mounting instructions supplied with each detector to ensure the most accurate, reliable displayed readings.