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# Carbon Monoxide Alarm Laws Take Effect July 1

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Tim Boyle/Getty Images

Carbon Monoxide alarms are displayed in a Home Depot store February 19, 2004 in Mount Prospect, Illinois.

Carbon monoxide alarms will become nearly as common in California homes as smoke detectors, when new safety rules take effect in two weeks.

A state law passed last year requires the devices to be installed in homes or hotel rooms if they have an attached garage, a fireplace or a gas-burning heater or kitchen appliance, such as a stove.

The rules will apply to single-family homes beginning July 1 and to all other affected units by the end of 2012.

Property owners who fail to install a carbon monoxide alarm will face fines of up to \$200.

[The law](#) was written by Sen. Alan Lowenthal (D-Long Beach) to protect residents from being poisoned by carbon monoxide – an invisible, odorless [gas which, according to the Center for Disease Control, is responsible for 500 deaths](#) in the United States every year.

Another 20,000 Americans are hospitalized annually with carbon monoxide poisoning, the CDC estimates.

"These deaths and emergency room visits are completely preventable," Lowenthal said in an emailed statement. "A carbon monoxide detector is a cheap, effective solution and they can be bought as close as your local hardware."

Carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms begin with dizziness and can lead quickly to severe headaches, nausea and other ailments. In severe cases, unconsciousness and death can occur within minutes.

Cities throughout the Bay Area are taking steps to advise their residents and property owners about the new rules.

“This is sensible life-saving, injury-prevention legislation,” San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee said in a statement. The city's building department produced a [leaflet that explains the new rules](#).

Carbon monoxide alarms are available for sale online or from hardware stores and other retailers for upwards of \$15.