

New State Law Mandates That Deadly Carbon Monoxide Must Be Monitored

By: [Margaret Baum](#) | *Special to The Examiner* | 07/07/11



Under a new state law that took effect July 1, owners of all single-family homes attached to a garage or a fossil fuel source must install carbon monoxide detectors, which cost about \$20. (Mike Koozmin/The Examiner)

One of the scariest moments in Elizabeth Bryan's life was discovering that carbon monoxide almost killed her entire family.

It was 10 years ago when her family members started feeling sick.

"I wandered into the basement and looked up at the ceiling and the carbon monoxide meter was hanging from the wires," Bryan said Thursday. "I popped it back in and it started beeping so much. It was a very terrifying experience for me."

After the gas company came out, Bryan was told the basement's carbon monoxide levels were so high that her entire family would have died in a matter of days.

Bryan, co-author of "Chicken Soup for the Soul: Count your Blessings" and an advocate for carbon monoxide detectors, shared her story Thursday with seniors at the Dr. George W. Davis Senior Center, where city fire officials distributed detectors donated by the manufacturer First Alert.

A new state law took effect July 1 that requires the owners of all single-family homes attached to a garage or a fossil fuel source to install such alarms, First Alert spokesman Tom Russo said.

Exposure to carbon monoxide is the leading cause of accidental poisoning in the United States, according to the American Medical Association.

“High concentrations of this colorless, odorless gas can cause cognitive impairment, loss of consciousness and/or coma, and is responsible for 450 deaths each year,” Russo said.

The City’s Department of Building Inspection will be enforcing the law, Director Vivian Day said.

“If you are selling your home, the inspectors will look for the carbon monoxide alarms to help protect you,” she said. The Department suggests installing an alarm outside each bedroom and on every unit of the home, including basements.

A carbon monoxide alarm can be purchased for about \$20 at most hardware stores.

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