

## Carbon Monoxide Detectors in Washington State

### Background

In 2009, the Washington legislature passed and the Governor signed into law Senate Bill 5561. This bill directed the State Building Code Council (SBCC) to adopt regulations regarding the installation of carbon monoxide detectors in new and existing dwellings. SB 5561 gave the SBCC discretion to determine the implementation date for existing rental dwellings and the discretion to exempt “categories of buildings classified as residential occupancies if it determines that requiring carbon monoxide alarms are unnecessary to protect the health and welfare of the occupants.”

The **initial** draft regulations proposed by the SBCC **exempted** those units that **did not** have a source of carbon monoxide and **did not** have an attached garage. The initial draft regulations also proposed that existing units must have CO alarms installed no later than **January 1, 2013**. WMFHA did submit written testimony asking the SBCC for extended time, exemptions and clarifications.

The SBCC met in November, 2009 to adopt the final CO alarm regulations. Two amendments were proposed to the initial draft. The first required that CO alarms be installed in **all existing rental units regardless whether there was a CO source in the unit**. The second changed the implementation date to **July 1, 2011**. Twelve members voted on the amendments and the vote on each was 6 to 6. On the vote for each amendment, the chair of the SBCC voted to break the tie and voted in favor of each amendment.

**As a result, under current law and current regulations adopted by the SBCC all rental units must have carbon monoxide detectors installed no later than July 1, 2011.**

Legislation was introduced during the 2010 legislative session that would have pushed back the deadline for installation of the CO alarms. However, that legislation did not pass. Therefore, the July 1, 2011 implementation deadline is still in effect as is the requirement of installation in all rental units. WMFHA will be working during the 2011 legislative session to move the date back to 2012, but in the event we are not successful we suggest rental owners and operators should begin now to implement a reasonable program of installation so the process can be completed by July 1, 2011.

## SBCC Rules Regarding Installation of Carbon Monoxide Detectors

### WAC 51-50-0907

[F] **907.2.9 Group R-2.** Fire alarm systems, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms shall be installed in Group R-2 occupancies as required in Sections 907.2.9.1 through 907.2.9.3.

[F] **907.2.9.3. Carbon monoxide alarms.** For new construction, an approved carbon monoxide alarm shall be installed by January 1, 2011, outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedroom in dwelling units. In a building where a tenancy exists, the tenant shall maintain the CO alarm as specified by the manufacturer including replacement of the batteries.

[F] **907.2.9.3.1 Existing dwelling units.** Existing dwelling units shall be equipped with carbon monoxide alarms by July 1, 2011.

**907.2.9.3.2 Alarm requirements.** Single station carbon monoxide alarms shall be listed as complying with UL 2034 and shall be installed in accordance with this code and the manufacturer's installation instructions.