



## **Carbon Monoxide Alarm Installment Requirement Postponed**

November 19, 2010

Today the State Building Code Council took action postponing the requirement that all existing multi-family housing units be equipped with at least one carbon monoxide alarm by July 1, 2011. The Council will now start a new rulemaking process that will allow time for further consideration of stakeholder interests.

New rules will likely be established by November 2011 and take effect July 1, 2012. It is expected that the new regulation will require installation of alarms in units by July 1, 2012. WMFHA will be seeking an exemption for those buildings that do not have a source of carbon monoxide. Without the action today, CO alarms would have been required in all new dwellings beginning January 1, 2011 and in all existing buildings by July 1, 2011.

After adopting regulations in November 2009, the SBCC received a number of complaints from a variety of groups and organizations including WMFHA and the lodging industry. The groups pointed out that the regulations had been adopted without giving stakeholders a meaningful opportunity for input and that the regulations, as adopted, would impose significant financial burdens on housing providers. WMFHA and other landlord organizations also pointed out that the International Code Council as part of its preparation of the 2012 codes is only requiring CO alarms in existing buildings that have fuel fired appliances or attached garages.

In adopting its Emergency Rule this morning, the SBCC stated that it would: 1) eliminate the requirement for installation of carbon monoxide alarms except where fuel-fired appliances or attached garages are present, and 2) delay requirements for installation of CO alarms in existing units. "This would allow further time for consideration of stakeholder economic interests and additional amendments."

Obviously, WMFHA is pleased that its efforts in cooperation with other landlord groups have been successful in delaying the deadline for CO alarm installation. However, there is much work remaining to be done on this issue and the WMFHA Government Affairs Committee will continue to work diligently to protect the interests of multifamily owners and operators. **The Council will now begin a new rule making process aimed at adopting new, final regulations regarding CO alarms.** As in the past, the Council will receive pressure from some advocates to require the alarms in all units regardless of fuel source in the dwelling.

It is also important to point out that carbon monoxide remains a serious health threat. Winter windstorms and associated power losses pose the greatest risk in the Northwest for illness or death caused by carbon monoxide poisoning. WMFHA urges all its members to have written materials on hand and ready to distribute to residents when a threat of loss of power is imminent.

**A printed warning is available in 25 languages at:**

**[www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/preparedness/disaster/carbon-monoxide.aspx](http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/preparedness/disaster/carbon-monoxide.aspx)**