# CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM NEWS RELEASE

DEPARTMENTS SHOULD WORK WITH SURROUNDING AREA AGENCIES ON NEWS RELEASES TO AVOID DUPLICATION WHEN ISSUING TO MEDIA.

**CONTACT:  
PHONE:**

**FIRE OFFICIALS REMIND RESIDENTS IMPORTANCE OF HAVING WORKING   
CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS IN THEIR HOMES**

*Carbon Monoxide Alarms should be tested monthly, batteries changed at least once annually.*

[YOUR CITY/COUNTY], Minn. – The [INSERT YOUR DEPARTMENT NAME] is reminding people to test their carbon monoxide (CO) alarms following an incident [DAY OR DATE] that [KILLED OR INJURED] [XX] people.

[YOUR FIRE OFFICIAL’S NAME AND TITLE] said the incident on [DATE] in the [XXXX] block of [STREET NAME] appears to have been the result of [INSERT CO SOURCE -- A MALFUNCTIONING HOT WATER HEATHER, FOR EXAMPLE]. The home did not have working CO alarms.

“Carbon monoxide alarms save lives — but only if they are kept in working order,” said [YOUR FIRE OFFICIAL’S NAME AND TITLE]. “An alarm is the only way to detect potentially lethal levels of this odorless, colorless gas in your home.”

Minnesota homes are required by law to have CO alarms. CO alarms need to be tested monthly and replaced every five to seven years, in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations.

**What is carbon monoxide?**CO is an odorless, colorless, toxic gas formed in the process of fossil fuel combustion. CO is produced when any material burns, but more is produced when there isn’t enough oxygen for efficient burning.

Common sources of CO in homes include any number of common fuel-burning devices:

* Furnaces
* Gas or kerosene space heaters
* Boilers
* Gas stoves
* Water heaters
* Gas dryers
* Fireplaces
* Charcoal grills
* Wood stoves
* Power generators
* Motor vehicles

**How does CO affect me?**The health effects of breathing in CO depend on the concentration of gas, the duration of exposure, and the health status of the exposed person.

For most people, the first signs of exposure to low concentrations of CO include mild headache, and breathlessness during moderate exercise. Continued exposure can lead to flu-like symptoms, including severe headaches, dizziness, fatigue, or nausea that may progress to confusion, irritability, impaired judgment, memory and coordination issues.

CO is called the “silent killer” because if the early signs are ignored, a person may lose consciousness and be unable to escape the danger. Lethal concentrations of CO have occurred within 10 minutes in a closed garage where a car was left idling.

**How do I choose a CO alarm?**

The [NAME OF YOUR DEPARTMENT] recommends a CO alarm with a digital readout and an alarm not combined in a smoke alarm unit. The readout indicates how many parts per million are in the atmosphere.

Here are some tips for choosing an alarm:

* Reasonably priced
* Easy to use, install and replace
* Easy-to-understand operating manual and warning tags
* Clearly visible digital readout of CO concentrations
* Accurate measurement of CO
* Small size, light weight

**What do I do when the alarm sounds?**Treat all activations as real. Evacuate everyone from your home immediately, leaving the door open for ventilation on your way out.

Call 911 from a neighbor’s home. Have your home inspected by professionals and repair any malfunctioning appliance.

Contact the [NAME OF YOUR FIRE DEPARTMENT] at [CONTACT INFORMATION] for more information about CO alarms. More information is also available [in this fact sheet](https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/sfm/for-families/Documents/Fact%20sheets/CO-alarm-fact-sheet.pdf) or on our website: [XXXXXXX].