

Carbon Monoxide Detector Activations

310.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the safe and efficient handling of calls associated with carbon monoxide (CO) detector activations.

310.2 POLICY

Exposure to CO can be hazardous to health. It is the policy of the Blue Ridge Fire District to respond to all reports and alarms indicating the presence of CO and mitigate the health risks associated with exposure to CO by its members and the public.

310.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

310.3.1 DISPATCH RESPONSIBILITIES

Any dispatcher who determines that a call for service involves a CO detector activation should inform responding personnel of this information via voice over the radio and by a notation in the electronic event record (if the responding apparatus are equipped with Mobile Data Terminals). The dispatcher should attempt to ascertain if people at the scene are displaying symptoms of CO poisoning and consider whether a medical aid response should also be dispatched. The responding medical aid personnel should also be advised of the CO detector activation.

310.3.2 ARRIVING UNITS

Arriving units should establish National Incident Management System/Incident Command System (NIMS/ICS) practices according to the Incident Management Policy. In addition, arriving units shall:

- (a) Assess for necessary rescue and safely move potential victims from the affected location. Activate a medical response if necessary.
- (b) Evaluate the situation through interviews prior to entering the building.
- (c) Assess airflow ventilation conditions and general building conditions.
- (d) Wear structural turnouts and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) to investigate the building using a CO detector, if available.
- (e) Have facepieces on and air flowing:
 1. Whenever information is inadequate to rule out toxic levels of CO.
 2. If anyone has displayed symptoms of CO poisoning.

310.3.3 INVESTIGATING PERSONNEL

Personnel investigating a reported CO detector activation should take the following actions:

- (a) Remove occupants and unnecessary personnel from the affected area.
- (b) Examine the activated detector to ensure that it is a CO detector and is in good condition.

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- (c) Determine if the activated detector is low-oxygen or CO-detecting, if possible.
- (d) Interview the occupant and/or reporting party to obtain background information on the activation, the past history of the activated detector and activities in the building at the time of the activation.
- (e) Check the premises and adjoining areas for CO sources, such as vehicles, open flame devices or closed fireplace dampers.
- (f) Check appliances for improper use, poor maintenance or obvious faulty installation or operation.
- (g) If responding personnel carry a CO detector, it may be used to assist in determining a source of CO.
- (h) If the source of CO is identified, personnel should take the following actions:
 - 1. If the source is a vehicle, open flame device or other source not intended for interior use, remove the source from the building or shut off the device and ventilate the building thoroughly.
 - 2. If the source is an improperly operating appliance, shut off the appliance and the appliance's main line valve and ventilate the building thoroughly.
 - (a) Encourage the occupant to have the appliance serviced by a reputable service technician or a plumbing and heating contractor.
 - (b) Do not attempt to repair or alter an appliance or heating unit.
 - 3. Do not ventilate the building with gasoline-powered smoke ejectors.
 - 4. Do not shut off the building's main gas valve unless necessary to control the problem.
- (i) If the source of CO is not identified, personnel should take the following actions:
 - 1. Consider requesting a response by the gas company. If it is necessary to leave the scene prior to arrival of the gas company, the occupants should be advised to remain out of the building until a gas company representative arrives.
 - 2. Complete any required property notification and provide a copy to the property owner or tenant.