



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE SERVICES
1500 Jefferson, Olympia, WA 98504

Washington State Building Code Council

Improving the built environment by promoting health, safety and welfare

STATE BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION NO. 12-02

- CODE:** Residential Code (WAC 51-51) and Fire Code (WAC 51-54)
- SECTION:** 315.2 (Residential Code) and 4603.8 (Fire Code)
- QUESTION:** **The adopted code amendments require existing dwellings to be equipped with CO alarms “...where alterations, repairs or additions requiring a permit occur, or where one or more sleeping rooms are added or created.”**
- At issue is the status of existing dwellings and dwelling units that are not undergoing such work. By applying these code amendments only to buildings undergoing construction that requires a permit, did the Council intend to exempt other existing dwellings from the RCW 19.27.530 requirement to provide CO alarms by January 1, 2013?**
- ANSWER:** No. It was not the intent of the Council to exempt existing dwellings from the requirement to install CO alarms by January 1, 2013; the Council recognizes that existing dwellings must have CO alarms installed by the statutory deadline. The language in the rules was intended to mitigate the impact on local building officials in terms of enforcement. Discussion during the special CO Alarm TAG meetings revealed that local officials could readily inspect the premises for the alarms when work requiring a permit was being completed. Thus, the permit language was adopted with the intention of facilitating inspection requirements.
- SUPERSEDES:** None
- REQUESTED BY:** City of Seattle Building Official

R315.2 Existing Dwellings. Existing dwellings shall be equipped with carbon monoxide alarms when alterations, repairs or additions requiring a permit occur, or when one or more sleeping rooms are added or created.

EXCEPTIONS: 1. Work involving the exterior surfaces of dwellings, such as the replacement of roofing or siding, or the addition or replacement of windows or doors, or the addition of a porch or deck, or electrical permits, are exempt from the requirements of this section.

2. Installation, alteration or repairs of noncombustion plumbing or mechanical systems are exempt from the requirements of this section.

4603.8 Carbon monoxide alarms. Existing Group R occupancies shall be provided with carbon monoxide alarms. R-2 occupancies not already equipped with carbon monoxide alarms shall be provided with carbon monoxide alarms when alterations, repairs or additions requiring a permit occur, or when one or more sleeping rooms are added or created. The carbon monoxide alarms shall be listed as complying with UL 2034 and be installed and maintained in accordance with NFPA 720 and the manufacturer's instructions.

EXCEPTIONS: 1. Work involving the exterior surfaces of dwellings, such as the replacement of roofing or siding, or the addition or replacement of windows or doors, or the addition of a porch or deck, or electrical permits.

2. Installation, alteration or repairs of noncombustion plumbing or mechanical systems.

3. Sleeping units or dwelling units in R-1 occupancies and R-2 college dormitories, hotel, and DSHS licensed boarding home and residential treatment facility occupancies which do not themselves contain a fuel-burning appliance, a fuel-burning fireplace, or have an attached garage, but which are located in a building with a fuel-burning appliance, a fuel-burning fireplace, or an attached garage, need not be provided with carbon monoxide alarms provided that:

a. The sleeping units or dwelling unit is not adjacent to any room which contains a fuel-burning appliance, a fuel-burning fireplace, or an attached garage; and

b. The sleeping units or dwelling unit is not connected by duct work or ventilation shafts with a supply or return register in the same room to any room containing a fuel-burning appliance, a fuel-burning fireplace, or to an attached garage; and

c. The building is provided with a common area carbon monoxide detection system.

d. An open parking garage, as defined in the International Building Code, or enclosed parking garage ventilated in accordance with Section 404 of the International Mechanical Code shall not be deemed to be an attached garage.