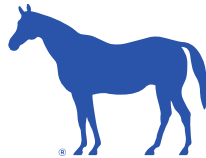


CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTION ORDINANCE PROPOSAL

Social Services and Public Safety Committee

Jeff Johnson, Fire Marshal, Lexington Fire Department

January 13, 2026



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Members of the CO ordinance work group

- Jennifer Reynolds *LFUCG Council*
- Lee Steele *Code Enforcement*
- Kevin Ingram *Code Enforcement*
- Charlie Lanter *Commissioner*
- Isabelle Ballard *Legislative Aide*
- Kenneth Armstrong *Public Safety Commissioner*
- Jeff Johnson *Fire Marshal*
- Jason Wells *Fire Chief*
- Kendra Thompson *Research Analyst*
- Michael Sanner *Law*
- Gabriel Thatcher *Law*

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Statistics

- 400+ deaths per year in the US
- 100,000+ ER visits per year
 - Most are under reported because most instances present as a cardiac event or seizure
 - In Lexington, 30 reported in 2025 including one fatality

Common Carbon Monoxide Sources

- Furnaces, stoves, hot water heaters
- Attached garages, generators
- Fireplaces, fuel burning space heaters

Key Statistics

Deaths: Each year, approximately **439 people** die from unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning in the United States. In 2022, this number rose to **1,244 deaths**, with **624** classified as accidental and **579** as suicides.

Emergency Room Visits: Over **100,000 individuals** visit emergency departments annually due to carbon monoxide poisoning, with tens of thousands requiring hospitalization.

Trends: The number of deaths from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning has increased significantly, with a reported **85.7% rise** from 2012 to 2022. This increase is attributed to factors such as the use of portable generators during power outages, which are linked to **40% of carbon monoxide deaths** related to consumer products since 2009.

Vulnerable Populations: Carbon monoxide poisoning disproportionately affects vulnerable groups, including children, pregnant women, and the elderly. Symptoms can often be mistaken for flu-like conditions, making timely detection crucial.

Preventive Measures: The implementation of carbon monoxide detectors has reduced by 50% the incidents of poisoning cases, highlighting the importance of preventative measures against this silent killer.

Code Perspective

- Since 2011, building codes have required carbon monoxide detection in all new construction or remodels.
- Some codes allow buildings to remain under the code in which it was built because of the substantial cost related to bringing certain structures up to current code (i.e. putting in a sprinkler system).
- The International Fire Code recognizes that the cost to upfit existing buildings with carbon monoxide detection is comparatively inexpensive, therefore the IFC requires existing structures with the potential for carbon monoxide to be equipped with carbon monoxide detection.

New Ordinance – Fire Prevention – Section 9

- **WHAT-** Require carbon monoxide detection in existing commercial structures according to IFC section 1103.9. CO alarms in existing structures built prior to 2011 are permitted to be solely battery-operated.
- **WHERE-** Carbon monoxide detection shall be required in I-1(Assisted Living Facilities), I-2 (Hospitals), I-4 (Daycare Facilities), and R (Apartments, Hotels, Boarding Houses) occupancies and in classrooms in Group E (Education) occupancies.
- **WHY-** Detection is required in the above occupancies if the following is present: fuel-burning appliances, fuel-burning fireplaces, forced air furnaces or attached private garages. If none of the above are present, i.e., an all-electric facility, Carbon monoxide detection is not required.
- **ENFORCEMENT-** The Fire Marshal's office of the Lexington Fire Department would enforce the above ordinance according to the enforcement procedures currently listed in Section 9 of the ordinance, which include being given notice by an order to remedy and a fire marshal order. An appeal process is also set forth in Section 9 of the ordinance.

New Ordinance – Code Enforcement – PM 705

- **WHAT-** Require carbon monoxide detection in existing residential structures according to IFC section 1103.9. Dwellings covered by the IRC shall be installed in accordance with Section R315 of that code. CO alarms in existing structures built prior to 2011 are permitted to be solely battery-operated.
- **WHERE-** Carbon monoxide detection shall be required in existing single and two-family dwellings.
- **WHY-** Detection is required in the above occupancies if the following is present: fuel-burning appliances, fuel-burning fireplaces, forced air furnaces, or attached private garages. If none of the above are present, i.e., an all-electric structure, carbon monoxide detection is not required.
- **ENFORCEMENT-** Lexington Code Enforcement identifies carbon monoxide hazards during routine inspections when invited in by a property owner or lessee. Short-length compliance notices are issued due to the immediate life-safety risk. Failure to comply results in punitive citations, consistent with the adopted code and enforcement authority.

Questions?



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