

ITEM #:	<u>38</u>
DATE:	<u>04-22-25</u>
DEPT:	<u>FIRE</u>

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: ORDINANCE ADOPTING REGULATIONS FOR CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS IN RENTAL PROPERTIES.

BACKGROUND:

At the March 11 meeting, Council reviewed a memo regarding the addition of carbon monoxide alarm requirements to the Rental Code. Council directed staff to draft an ordinance for Council's review.

Staff reviewed the State Code and the International Building & Fire Codes to create language that is clear and enforceable locally. For the most part, the State of Iowa adopted the same language cited in the International Building and Fire Codes. The biggest difference is that the State added some exceptions making its regulation slightly less restrictive than the International Code, likely because it also applies to owner-occupied structures.

The proposed ordinance does not include the exceptions adopted by the State because staff does not feel that they provide an equivalent level of protection for our transient tenant population. For example, one exception eliminates the need for a carbon monoxide alarm in the vicinity of the sleeping areas when there is an alarm placed in the same room as the fuel-fired appliance. There is a risk that a tenant with a bedroom on the second floor will not hear, or will ignore, an alarm in the basement.

Staff feels that the additional level of protection provided when the alarm is located near the sleeping area is justified in rental properties. Additionally, the simplicity of enforcement when the alarm is always required in the same location assists our customers and inspectors with education and enforcement.

Staff presented the first draft of the ordinance at the April 8 meeting. At that time, Council made a motion to add the effective date to the ordinance and to clarify the language to explain what "existing" meant in Sec. 13.802(5)(c)(ii) as it relates to when battery powered carbon monoxide detectors can be used. Those changes have been made and are included in the attached draft.

PUBLIC OUTREACH:

Staff sent notices to nearly 1,500 rental contacts alerting them of the new ordinance and July 1, 2025 effective date. To date, four responses have been received all in support of the ordinance, but seeking clarification on alarm placement.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. a.) Adopt on second reading the carbon monoxide alarm ordinance for rental properties.
b.) Suspend the rules to consider third reading and adoption of the carbon monoxide alarm ordinance for rental properties.
2. Request staff to modify the language and bring back an amended draft for second reading.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Adopting a carbon monoxide ordinance locally will give staff the ability to ensure tenants have an additional layer of protection from carbon monoxide poisoning. To date, staff has received zero opposition to the ordinance. Expediting the codification will allow staff to begin updating educational materials prior to the effective date of July 1, 2025. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1 a & b, as described above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[CO Ordinance 2nd Draft.docx](#)