



Town of Clifton Park

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FEBRUARY 23, 2010

OFFICE OF THE SUPERVISOR

CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS AND AMANDA'S LAW

Amanda's Law, a law mandating the installation of carbon monoxide (CO) detectors in all homes in New York State, took effect on Monday, Feb. 22. The law is named for 16-year-old West Seneca resident Amanda Hansen, who died last year due to a carbon monoxide leak from a defective boiler while she slept at a friend's house.

Amanda's law requires all one- and two-family residences built before January 1, 2008 to have at least one carbon monoxide alarm installed on the all levels of the building which have a sleeping area. The alarm must be clearly audible in all sleeping areas over background noise levels with all intervening doors closed. Homes built after January 1, 2008 are required to have CO alarms on every level of the home if the home which contains a source of carbon monoxide and on every sleeping level.

Under Amanda's Law, homes built before January 1, 2008, are permitted to have battery-powered CO alarms, while homes built after this date are required to have the alarms hard-wired into the building. Previously, only homes built or bought after July 30, 2002 were required to have these devices installed.

Carbon monoxide can be produced by any fuel fired appliance, equipment, device or system; solid fuel burning appliance, equipment, device or system; as well as other appliances, equipment, devices and systems that may emit carbon monoxide such as fireplaces, garages and all other motor vehicle-related occupancies.

At high concentration levels, carbon monoxide can be fatal in minutes. CO rapidly accumulates in the blood and is attracted to the hemoglobin in your bloodstream. When breathed in, CO passes through the lungs and bonds with hemoglobin, displacing the oxygen that cells need to function.

When carbon monoxide is inhaled it can lead to breathing difficulties, impaired judgment and memory, damage to the nervous system, cardiac trauma, brain damage, coma and death. Everyone is susceptible, but the American Medical Association says that unborn and young children, pregnant women, senior citizens and people with heart or respiratory problems are especially vulnerable and are at the highest risk for death or serious injury.

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The symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are often mistaken for the flu and can include dizziness, fatigue, weakness, throbbing headache, nausea, vomiting, irregular breathing, sleepiness and confusion. By the time people realize there is a problem, they are often too sick or too disoriented to get out of the house and get help.

According to the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC), fire departments in New York responded to more than 42,000 calls involving carbon monoxide in 2007, the most recent year with complete data. A majority of these calls came in at night time hours and during the winter months, although carbon monoxide poisoning can occur at any time during the year.

In addition to installing carbon monoxide alarms, Governor David Paterson and the OFPC remind homeowners to take the following actions to help reduce their risk and stay safe:

- Test and/or replace alarms according to the manufacturer's instructions;
- Have heating systems, vents, chimneys and flues tested, inspected and cleaned by a qualified technician each year;
- Never leave a car running in an attached garage;
- Regularly examine vents and chimneys for improper connections, rust, soot or other debris;
- Never run a vehicle, generator or other fuel powered motor indoors, even if garage doors are open to the outdoors;
- Never use a gas oven to heat a home, and only use barbecue grills outdoors – never in a house or garage; and
- Remember that carbon monoxide alarms are not substitutes for smoke alarms. Smoke alarms are also required on every level of a home as well as in and outside all sleeping areas.

For the text of Amanda's Law, please see <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/code/COAlarm.htm>

To view the new public service announcement on Amanda's Law, please visit: <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/pres/pr2010/cm psa.html>. The PSA will be broadcast on local television stations across the State starting today and will run through the end of May.

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