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Alaska REAL ESTATE BY DAVE WINDSOR

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CO AND SMOKE ALARMS

Many people are confused about the requirements for CO and Smoke Alarms. They sell their home, the Inspector walks through, and they have to add alarms hither and yon. Here is a summary of the Code requirements in Anchorage.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms: The Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) follows the International Residential Code (IRC). MOA Title 23, Section 23.15.908.7 requires that a CO detector be installed on each floor level. If any level contains bedrooms, the CO detector should be immediately outside the bedrooms – that is, in the hallway leading to the bedrooms. This is the basic rule.

The question sometimes arises as to how the alarms are powered. In new construction, these alarms are hard-wired and have a battery back-up. They are also interconnected so that, if one goes off, they all activate. If your home is so configured, any repairs required by a home inspector must follow this same configuration. Homes built in the last 10 years are likely to be configured this way.

If you have an older home, or a home not built in this manner, any new CO detectors required may be either electric with battery backup or battery operated. They may not be plug-in electric only.

Smoke Alarms: The MOA has its own Building Safety Regulation on this topic – Title 23 Section 23.15.907.2.11. Another helpful site is <http://www.muni.org/Departments/Fire/PublicAffairs/Pages/ChildernandSmokeAlarms.aspx> (Muni has spelt ‘children’ incorrectly).

Smoke detectors are required in every sleeping room, plus an additional unit in the immediate vicinity outside the “sleeping area” (in most cases, outside the “bedrooms”, similar to the IRC Carbon Monoxide requirement). Even if there are no bedrooms on one of the home levels, a smoke detector is required. (This will alert you when your kitchen activities are overcooking!)

The reference to “sleeping room” suggests that any room used for sleeping, other than a legal “bedroom” which must have a closet and egress window, is a must for a smoke alarm to protect the sleeper. In addition, every level of the home must have at least one Smoke alarm whether it has “sleeping rooms” or not.

In new construction, the Code requires the smoke alarms to be hard-wired with battery backup, and interconnected, and you will find that homes built since the mid 90’s are so constructed. In older

homes the hallway Smoke Detector may be battery operated unless electric is available in the ceiling, which is probably already there for a hard-wired CO detector if the home was built mid-80's or later. Then the best solution is to put up a hard-wired combination CO/Smoke Detector to cover both codes.

Summary: Current new construction codes in Anchorage, enforced rigidly since the tragic accident in Bear Valley a few years ago, require interconnected CO detectors with electric and battery support, and Smoke alarms also with an interconnected system, electrically powered plus battery back-up. On older homes, the Municipality will compromise.

It would seem logical, and is permissible, for the CO and Smoke protection to consist of a single, dual function unit, particularly in the areas required other than in the bedrooms themselves where only a Smoke detector is mandatory. The idea is that dual function (CO and Smoke) units are permissible so long as each individual code is clearly maintained.

Finally, although the codes do not specify exact locations, the units may be on the ceiling or wall, but should not be tight into the line where ceiling and wall meet. Install Smoke detectors at least one foot away from corners where smoke would curl and not necessarily reach the device in a fire. CO detection may also be captured equally well on a wall or ceiling. Carbon Monoxide mixes throughout the air at all levels.

Note: It is difficult to find a single source of exact laws at the MOA, and this article does not purport to provide a precise code interpretation. The above comments are meant as a guide only to assist you with understanding requests for repairs. The MOA uses the IRC Code as a basis for Carbon Monoxide protection, and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) provisions for Smoke alarm rules.

Readers are advised to refer to the Fire Department at 267-4900 or MOA Development Services at 343-8301 for further clarification if required.

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NEW FINANCING LOAN LIMITS FOR 2020

Effective 1st January

Loan Program	Single Family - 1 Unit	Duplex - 2 Unit	Triplex - 3 Unit	Fourplex - 4 Unit
Fannie Mae/Freddie Mac	\$ 765,600.00	\$ 980,325.00	\$1,184,925.00	\$1,472,550.00
FHA	\$ 401,350.00	\$ 513,800.00	\$ 621,050.00	\$ 771,850.00
HUD-184	\$ 453,100.00	\$ 579,968.00	\$ 742,359.00	\$ 920,525.00
AHFC	\$ 842,160.00	\$ 980,325.00	\$1,184,925.00	\$1,472,550.00
VA Zero Down	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,000,000.00
VA 5% Down	\$1,500,000.00	\$1,500,000.00	\$1,500,000.00	\$1,500,000.00