

Polson City/Rural FIRE DEPARTMENT Operating Guidelines

Issued By: Chief Thomas J. Maloney

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Revised By: Chief John Ed Fairchild

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320.00 Carbon Monoxide Investigations

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On notification of an activation of a Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detector, possible exposure to CO or request for specialized equipment the following will be followed:

General:

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is an odorless, tasteless, colorless gas that is deadly. It is a by-product of a fuel burning process. Many appliances such as furnaces, kitchen stoves, water heaters, automobiles, etc., can produce CO. When a faulty or unusual condition exist, carbon monoxide may be vented into areas were people are present.

Carbon Monoxide is poisoning may be difficult to diagnose. Its symptoms are similar to the flu, which may include headache, nausea, fatigue and dizzy spells.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has established a maximum safe working level for CO at 35 parts per million (PPM) over an 8 hour period, in the general workplace. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has established that residential levels are not to exceed 9 PPM over 8-hour average.

Procedure:

1. If detector is out of service notify the dispatcher to obtain the closest CO Meter. This may be done through Fire Communications.

2. Verify the medical status and location of building occupants. All on scene medical emergencies will be treated in a safe environment. (i.e. outside in the fresh air.) Notify Fire Communications of the number of patients being treated; determine additional assistance required on scene, and what type.

•A crew consisting of at least two SCBA qualified firefighters with a portable radio will enter the structure and perform a primary search to insure building evacuation. After insuring all occupants are safely removed a crew will begin metering the building. The meter will be calibrated outside the structure according to manufacturer recommendations. Readings will be taken in all rooms/areas of the effected building.

•The meter crew will utilize SCBA, Portable Radio and attached CO Checklist to document findings. Ventilation of the building will begin after readings are taken. After investigation is done have the owner/occupant sign the CO Checklist and Notice of Findings Sheet after it was explained.

3. In the event a call was received for a medical emergency and CO exposure symptoms appear, it will be necessary to verify that a potential CO emergency exists. Activation for an Engine/Tanker and/or closest CO Meter will be done through Fire Communications. Evacuation of all occupants will begin and treatment will be administered.

4. If no cause for detector activation is found and acceptable levels of CO are present, advise the homeowner to have the detector serviced and place it out of service. Complete the checklist and attach checklist to the alarm sheet.

5. If an unacceptable level of CO is present, investigate to find the potential source of CO and begin ventilation of the structure. Notify Code Enforcement and local utility or private fuel supplier.

6. Advise the owner/occupant that we will re-check the building at any time and to notify the fire department at any time if any problem is suspected.

9 PPM OR LESS - ACCEPTABLE LEVELS ARE WITH IN NORMAL RANGE

10 TO 99 PPM. - ABOVE NORMAL READING AND A POTENTIAL PROBLEM EXIST.

EVACUATE, SURVEY APPLIANCES AND BEGIN TO VENTILATE AND PROVIDE TREATMENT IF NECESSARY.

100 & ABOVE PPM - POTENTIAL LETHAL PROBLEM EXISTS. EVACUATE AND SURVEY APPLIANCES AND TREAT OCCUPANTS.

CO IS LIGHTER THAN AIR & LFL 12.5% - 74%