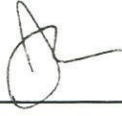



F R O M	Name & Title	Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D. Commissioner 	Health Department	 HEALTH DEPARTMENT BALTIMORE MARYLAND
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 210 Guilford Ave.	MEMO	
	Subject	Council Bill 08-0019 - Building Code - Dwellings - Carbon Monoxide Alarms		

To: President and Members  
of the City Council  
c/o  
409 City Hall

February 14, 2008

The Baltimore City Health Department is pleased to support Council Bill 08-0019, which would require **the installation and maintenance of carbon monoxide-** for its effort to prevent carbon monoxide-related morbidity and mortality in Baltimore

This bill follows in the footsteps of other statutes nationwide that require carbon monoxide monitors in homes. The bill will require that owners install and maintain at least one carbon monoxide alarm in dwellings with carbon monoxide risks, including fuel-burning appliances, a fire place, and/or an attached garage.

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas produced as a by-product of incomplete combustion of carbon-based fuels. At low concentrations, carbon monoxide exposure can cause nausea, head-aches and fatigue in healthy people and chest pain in people with heart disease. At high concentrations, exposure can be fatal.<sup>1</sup> The elderly, pregnant women, young infants, and people with pre-existing cardiac or lung conditions, are the most susceptible to negative health effects associated with carbon monoxide exposure.<sup>2</sup>

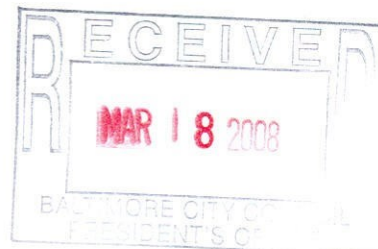
Carbon monoxide related deaths and hospitalizations are preventable. In Baltimore, according to a preliminary analysis of mortality records, there were twenty deaths due to accidental exposure to carbon monoxide between -2000 and 2006.<sup>3</sup>

There is evidence -of significant levels of non-fatal exposure to carbon monoxide -in Baltimore and nationwide. However, a complete account of non-fatal exposure is not possible due to a lack of mandated reporting. Nationally, it is estimated that approximately 15,200 persons with confirmed or

1 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Office of Radiation and Indoor Air. *Protect Your Family and Yourself from Carbon Monoxide Poisoning*. October 1996. Available at: [http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pdfs/co\\_factsheet\\_en.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pdfs/co_factsheet_en.pdf)

2 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *Healthy Homes Issues: Carbon Monoxide*. October 2007. Available at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/healthyhomes/carbonmonoxide.cfm>

3 Baltimore City Health Department. Mortality Records, 2000- 2006.



Carbon monoxide poisonings -can be prevented with the use of a properly installed and functioning carbon monoxide alarm. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the use of carbon monoxide detectors in homes.<sup>12</sup> Studies have shown that cities with CO detector ordinances have lower reported case fatality rates than in cities without ordinances<sup>13</sup>

There are currently eleven other states that require carbon monoxide detectors in homes, including: Alaska, Illinois, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Vermont, Texas and Florida. -Five of these (Alaska, Illinois, Minnesota, Massachusetts and Rhode Island) require that all dwellings – both old and new construction -- have carbon monoxide detection devices installed.

This bill would be an important step in the prevention of carbon monoxide poisoning in Baltimore City.

Cc: Angela Gibson

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12 Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. *Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Guidelines*. January 2005.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/co/pdfs/guidelines.pdf>

13 Clifton et al. "Surveillance for Carbon Monoxide Poisoning using a National Media Clipping Service." *The American Journal of Emergency Medicine* 19, no. 2 (March 2001): 106-108.