Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 1075 (Senator Conway)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Environmental Matters

Public Safety - Hotels - Carbon Monoxide Alarms

This emergency bill requires a "hotel" to install a "carbon monoxide alarm" inside each guest room within the hotel by April 1, 2015. Alternatively, if there is a centralized alarm system that is capable of emitting a distinct and audible sound to warn all occupants, the hotel owner may install a carbon monoxide alarm within 25 feet of any carbon monoxide-producing fixture and equipment. Except as part of routine maintenance, a person may not render a carbon monoxide alarm inoperable.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: Local government expenditures may increase minimally for outreach efforts and determinations of initial compliance of hotels with the bill's requirements. Ongoing local expenditures may increase minimally as a result of potential increased fire and rescue service calls. Local government revenues may increase minimally in the short term from noncompliant hotels paying for fees associated with permits and building inspections. Overall, the bill is not anticipated to have a significant impact on local finances.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: Under the bill, a "hotel" is a building or group of buildings that (1) is under the same management; (2) contains more than 16 sleeping accommodations for hire; and (3) is used primarily by transients who are lodged with or without meals. The

term includes an inn, motel, club, and apartment hotel. The bill modifies the definition of "carbon monoxide alarm" so that, for a hotel, the device (1) is wired into an alternating current (AC) powerline with secondary battery backup; (2) is plugged into an electrical outlet, not controlled by a switch, with battery backup; or (3) is battery powered, sealed, tamper resistant, and uses a long-life battery.

Current Law: Chapter 401 of 2007 requires a carbon monoxide alarm to be installed in a central location outside of each sleeping area within a "dwelling" newly constructed on or after January 1, 2008. If there is a centralized alarm system that is capable of emitting a distinct and audible sound to warn all occupants, the owner of the dwelling may install a carbon monoxide alarm within 25 feet of any carbon monoxide-producing fixture and equipment. Except as part of routine maintenance, a person may not render a carbon monoxide alarm in operable.

A "dwelling" means a building or part of a building that provides living or sleeping facilities, and includes a one- or two-family dwelling, multifamily dwelling, hotel, motel, or dormitory. A "carbon monoxide alarm" is a device that (1) senses carbon monoxide; (2) when sensing carbon monoxide, is capable of emitting a distinct and audible sound; (3) is listed and carries the listing of a nationally recognized testing laboratory approved by the Office of the State Fire Marshal; and (4) is wired into an AC powerline with secondary backup.

The requirement to install a of carbon monoxide alarm only applies to a dwelling that relies on the combustion of a fossil fuel for heat, ventilation, hot water, or clothes dryer operation.

Real estate sale disclosure forms for covered dwellings must disclose whether carbon monoxide alarms have been installed.

Background: Carbon monoxide is an odorless, tasteless, invisible gas. Carbon monoxide results from the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, such as wood, kerosene, gasoline, charcoal, propane, natural gas, and oil. In the home, carbon monoxide is formed from incomplete combustion from any flame-fueled (*i.e.*, not electric) device, including ranges, ovens, clothes dryers, furnaces, fireplaces, grills, space heaters, vehicles, and water heaters. Furnaces and water heaters may be sources of carbon monoxide, but if they are vented properly, the carbon monoxide escapes to the outside air. Open flames, such as from ovens and ranges, are the most common source of carbon monoxide in the home.

Carbon monoxide detectors trigger an alarm based on an accumulation of carbon monoxide over time. Carbon monoxide can do harm with high levels of exposure in a

short period of time, or with lower levels over a long period of time. Detectors require a continuous power supply. Models are available that offer back-up battery power.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Carroll, Harford, Montgomery, and St. Mary's counties; cities of Bowie and Takoma Park; Department of Housing and Community Development; Maryland Association of Counties; Maryland Municipal League; Department of State Police; Department of Legislative Services

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