



# FIRE DEPARTMENT



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## Town of Sunderland, Massachusetts

Steven J. Benjamin, Fire Chief

105 River Road, Sunderland, MA 01375

Phone: (413) 665-2465 • Fax: (413) 665-7599

[www.sunderlandfire.com](http://www.sunderlandfire.com) • Email: [fire@townofsunderland.us](mailto:fire@townofsunderland.us)

## Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Detector Inspections – What to Know

If you are a realtor or homeowner and you are selling a home, part of the process will include having the smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors inspected and signed off by the fire department. Massachusetts General Law Chapter 148, Section 26F requires that all resale of property transactions be issued a Certificate of Compliance by the local fire department stating that the smoke detectors and Carbon Monoxide detectors are present, correct, and functioning at the home at the time of the resale. This includes sale of homes such as property transfers between family members.

Selling a home is huge process, and as always, we are here to assist homeowners and realtors in obtaining the Certificate of Compliance by making the procedure as easy as possible.

### **Please read and understand the information below that will provide you with important scheduling and inspection information:**

#### **Certificates of Compliance:**

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 26F and 26F ½ requires the issuance of a Certificate of Compliance upon successful completion of smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector inspection upon sale or transfer of a residential property. Inspections are valid for 60 days from date of successful completion of inspection. Yes, WE DO check the expiration dates on all smoke and CO detectors in the structure. We also check for the house numbers. See below for more information.

#### **What Else Do We Inspect During a Visit?**

*The Fire Department may also observe for deficiencies of other fire protection requirements for the home (oil burners, fuel oil lines, propane tanks, supplemental heating units, abandoned fuel tanks etc). These items must be in compliance with all 527 CMR Fire Regulations and Massachusetts General Laws. Deficiencies must be resolved prior to issuance of the certificate.*

#### **Appointments:**

- All smoke detector appointments shall be made at least 7 business days prior to the scheduled closing or the date/time you would like the inspection.
- For the best scheduling and flexibility, the earlier you can make your appointment, the better.
- *You must have available the year of construction or last permitted renovation when scheduling an appointment as well as the complete correct address of the property.*
- Last minute requests for inspections are not normally available with the Fire Inspector. Please plan accordingly.
- All requests for 26F or other inspections should be emailed to us at: [inspections@sunderlandfire.com](mailto:inspections@sunderlandfire.com) or you may call us at 413-665-2465, choosing option #1 to leave a voice mail for our Fire Inspector.



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**Please note:** Sunderland Fire Department is an On Call/Volunteer department and we do not have full time personnel. Last minute requests cannot be guaranteed.

### Inspection Fees & Re-Inspect Fees:

Fees will be collected prior to an inspection being conducted. If a re-inspection is required, the second fee will be collected prior to that inspection. Our current fee schedule is available online at [www.sunderlandfire.com](http://www.sunderlandfire.com) under the Inspections/Permits page. At the time you speak with the Fire Inspector to schedule your appointment, you will be informed of the appropriate inspection fee due the day of inspection.

### Testing of Devices:

Property owners, their agents or proxies are required to test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to insure they are up to code prior to the inspection. Each device must be activated and functional and installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Licensed fire alarm technicians may be needed to conduct testing of low voltage or central station monitored alarm systems. Testing must conform to manufacture's requirements. It is strongly recommended to retain manufacturer's instructions for Fire Department review during inspection.

### Age of the Home VERSUS Renovations or Additions:

- The age of the home being sold or when it was last permitted for any major renovation or addition to the home, will determine the requirements for locations and quantities of smoke detectors and CO detectors throughout the home.
- In accordance with the Massachusetts State Building Code 780 CMR, alterations/renovations to residential properties require an upgrade to smoke detection systems to meet the current edition of the building code. This applies to the entire dwelling.
- Unreported alterations to a property may result in an order to upgrade smoke detectors to meet the code in effect at the time of alteration. The Sunderland Fire Chief and Sunderland Building Inspector make this determination. Alterations requiring upgrades to smoke detectors may include but not be limited to: adding a bedroom or complete renovation of the dwelling or a large portion thereof.
- If at any time the smoke detectors and/or CO detectors were upgraded voluntarily by the homeowner (when no renovations or addition(s) were done) to a newer standard per the Massachusetts laws or regulations, the home must then stay at the level and cannot revert to it's original year of compliance.
- A seller must maintain the same level of protection that is currently installed the home.

### Smoke Detectors:

- Any smoke detectors that are 10 years of age or older, will need to be replaced with new detectors.
- Please refer to the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services Guide (available on our website or from them) for all other smoke detector regulations for installing, locations, maintaining, etc.



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### Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detectors:

- Carbon Monoxide detectors are required by law in every home that contains fossil fuel burning appliances, heating systems, fireplaces/woodstoves, gas-powered fireplaces, etc. Natural gas, Oil, Propane, Wood, Pellets, and Coal are all fuels which release Carbon Monoxide during the burning process
- Carbon Monoxide detectors are also required if the home has an attached garage. Even if the home has electric heat and appliances, cars produce Carbon Monoxide, and detectors are required.
- Carbon Monoxide detectors are required on all habitable levels of a home.
- Finished basements are required to have Carbon Monoxide detectors
- Detectors must be placed within 10 feet of bedrooms
- Plug-in style detectors or battery powered detectors are acceptable, unless the home is new enough to require they be hard-wired.
- Carbon Monoxide detectors must not be older than 5 years.
- If you must replace detectors that are hard-wired, a detector with a battery back-up system is highly recommended (that way if the power goes out, the detectors will still function normally)
- Combination smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors are available at most hardware stores and home centers.
- Please refer to the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services Guide (available on our website or from them) for all other smoke detector regulations for installing, locations, maintaining, etc.

### House Numbers – State Law and Town Bylaw:

- Massachusetts General Law Chapter 148, Section 59; requires verification that house numbers are properly displayed on the home and are visible from the street.
- Town of Sunderland Bylaw, Chapter 49, Sections 1-6 require that numbers shall be:
  - a minimum of 4 inches tall in a contrasting color and made of 'permanent, weatherproof materials.
  - Such number(s) shall be visible from the street upon which the structure fronts. Any structure that is not visible from the street or roadway, shall have the assigned number posted on a suitable support at the entrance to the driveway that services such structure.
  - It is the responsibility of the homeowner to obtain, display and maintain such number(s).
  - Should a home require a new address to be assigned, this is done with the Fire Chief only.

**Please Note: Failure to meet this requirement will result in a failed inspection and the need to reschedule.**

Additional information is available on our website at: [www.sunderlandfire.com](http://www.sunderlandfire.com)

[The Massachusetts Department of Fire Services website](http://www.mass.gov/fire) also has information regarding smoke detectors and Carbon Monoxide detectors.

**Any questions?** Please email us at: [inspections@sunderlandfire.com](mailto:inspections@sunderlandfire.com) or you may call us at 413-665-2465, choosing option #1 to leave a voice mail for our Fire Inspector.