



Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation  
920 Colorado St.  
Austin, Texas 78701  
Phone: (800) 803-9202

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 27, 2022

Tela Mange

Public Information Officer

Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation

512.463.3208

## **Retrofitting Boilers in Commercial Buildings, Apartments and Hotels to Detect Carbon Monoxide Can Save Lives**

**AUSTIN** – Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that can kill – and it is produced by boilers and other equipment commonly used in commercial buildings where people work and sleep, including apartment buildings, hotels, dormitories and hospitals.

A state rule adopted in July 2020 requires that building owners install carbon monoxide detectors in all boiler rooms when they are installing new boilers that can produce carbon monoxide, along with interlocks that can automatically shut down malfunctioning equipment. TDLR began enforcing the rule in September 2020.

TDLR now recommends that building owners consider installing carbon monoxide detectors in all boiler rooms and mechanical rooms that have equipment that could produce carbon monoxide. An estimated 35,000 boiler rooms in Texas need retrofitting to make them safer.

“It’s scary to think that many schools, hotels and apartment buildings don’t have a basic piece of equipment that could alert people when carbon monoxide is present. That is why I always carry a personal CO detector when I travel, and I have outfitted my home with multiple CO detectors,” said Chief Boiler Inspector Rob Troutt. “Recent incidents across the United States and in popular foreign tourist areas have demonstrated the importance of proper maintenance and the need for personal and commercial carbon monoxide detectors.”

The manager of an apartment complex in Plano decided that spending the money to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning made more sense than waiting for someone to become ill or to die from exposure to the colorless, odorless gas.

The Creekside Village Apartments has four boiler rooms that recently were retrofitted for a total of about \$10,000.

Contact: Tela Mange | Public Information Officer | Texas Department of Licensing & Regulation

512-463-3208 | [tela.mange@tdlr.texas.gov](mailto:tela.mange@tdlr.texas.gov) | [media.inquiries@tdlr.texas.gov](mailto:media.inquiries@tdlr.texas.gov) | [www.tdlr.texas.gov](http://www.tdlr.texas.gov)

TDLR Customer Service | (512) 463-6599 | Toll-Free (in Texas) | (800) 803-9202 | Relay Texas-TDD: (800) 735-2989

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“In the long run, you will save money and save people from getting hurt,” said Daurys Castillo, manager of the Creekside Village Apartments.

Retrofitting existing boilers in a boiler room can be quite costly, but there are less-expensive steps that building owners can take to make their properties safer, including installing a CO detector in the boiler room with an audible alarm that’s located outside the boiler room.

Sometimes, bringing newly installed boilers or an existing boiler into compliance with the new rule could result in a substantial financial hardship for owners if their manufacturing machinery were to suddenly shut down without warning. In certain situations, TDLR has approved variance requests if the owner agrees to the following:

- A 24-hour monitoring system must be installed in conjunction with the CO detector, and the system shall alert the owner/operator(s) that carbon monoxide is present so corrective action can be taken to avoid a sudden boiler shutdown.
- With the remote monitoring system installed, the CO detector sends an alarm to the owner/operator at 50 ppm and shall disable the boiler burners at 200 ppm.

Building owners can contact 512-539-5716 for more information about retrofitting equipment or obtaining a variance.

#### About TDLR

*TDLR provides regulatory oversight for a broad range of occupations, businesses, facilities, and equipment in Texas. The agency protects the health and safety of Texans by ensuring they are served by qualified, licensed professionals. Inspections of individuals, businesses, and equipment are done on a regular basis to safeguard the public. Currently, the agency regulates 37 business and occupational licensing programs with almost 1,000,000 licensees across the state.*

Visit TDLR’s [website](#) for more information and resources. You can search the [TDLR licensee database](#), and also find [past violations](#) in which a final order was issued against companies or individuals. TDLR’s Customer Service line is available anytime between 7 a.m. until 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 1-800-803-9202. TDLR representatives are fluent in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

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Contact: Tela Mange | Public Information Officer | Texas Department of Licensing & Regulation  
512-463-3208 | [tela.mange@tdlr.texas.gov](mailto:tela.mange@tdlr.texas.gov) | [media.inquiries@tdlr.texas.gov](mailto:media.inquiries@tdlr.texas.gov) | [www.tdlr.texas.gov](http://www.tdlr.texas.gov)  
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