

Fuel Gas Detectors

A list of **best practices** for loss prevention to help United Mutual agent partners and members identify the most common hazards associated with Fuel Gas Detectors.

You've no doubt heard of the phrase "the canary in the coal mine." And you may know that canaries, being more sensitive to noxious gases generated in mines became the unwitting detection systems when it was time to evacuate. However, even before the use of the tiny birds, humans were elected to perform this unenviable task. During the Industrial Revolution an unlucky miner was chosen to check the mine for gas, oftentimes selecting a new hire or in some cases, children! Referred to as firemen in North America, they were known as monks across the Atlantic. Fortunately, today, neither fowl nor people are needed for this task.

Today, fuel gas detectors are a plug-in device that can be placed within close proximity of heating appliances and other gas combusting devices that use natural gas, propane or any liquefied petroleum gas for operation. And, there are a growing number of states that are making these detectors mandatory installations as follows:

Maine: <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/25/title25sec2469.html>

Illinois: <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/103/SB/10300SB1370.htm>

New Jersey: <https://legiscan.com/NJ/text/A3304/id/2150802>

One catastrophe that began that initiated the need for these detectors is chronicled in this account from Maine in September 2019, costing one firefighter's life and injuring several other. Read about it here:

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/maine-propane-blast-firefighter-fire-chief-brother>

Fuel Gas Detectors-Highlights

Powered via battery, plugging into an electrical outlet, or they can be hardwired.

Placement is within any room where propane, natural gas or liquefied petroleum gas-fueled appliances are used.

They do not detect carbon monoxide, although some devices offer that feature.

They detect unspent fuel for furnaces, heaters, stoves, etc., rather than the byproduct of spent fuel, i.e., exhaust fumes. Now widely available, prices range from \$32 to \$300.



- Refer to local, state and federal laws, NFPA 715 (Standard for the Installation of Fuel Gases Detection and Warning Equipment) as well as manufacturers' instructions for installation, testing and maintenance requirements.

Lastly, using the Maine statute as a blueprint, their law requires deployment of at least one of these devices as follows:

- A. Each unit in any building of multifamily occupancy
- B. A fraternity house, sorority house or dormitory that is affiliated with an educational facility
- C. A children's home, emergency children's shelter, children's residential care facility, shelter for homeless children or specialized children's home.
- D. A hotel, motel or inn
- E. A mixed use occupancy that contains a dwelling unit
- F. A business occupancy
- G. A mercantile occupancy
- H. An assembly occupancy

Please let us know if you have experience with fuel gas detectors and how they have worked for you.

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