

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 2, 2013
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 11, 2013
CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 56

Introduced by Assembly Member Weber
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Ammiano, Brown, Holden, and
Maienschein)
(Coauthor: Senator Cannella)

January 7, 2013

An act to add Article 7 (commencing with Section 32080) to Chapter 1 of Part 19 of Division 1 of Title 1 of the Education Code, relating to school facilities.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 56, as amended, Weber. School facilities: carbon monoxide devices.

Existing law, the Leroy F. Greene School Facilities Act of 1998, requires certain new school facilities construction projects that require the approval of the Department of General Services, as specified, to include an automatic fire detection, alarm, and sprinkler system. The act also requires certain modernization projects that require the approval of the department to include an automatic fire detection and alarm system, as specified.

Existing law requires an owner of a dwelling unit intended for human occupancy to install a carbon monoxide device, as specified, in each existing dwelling unit having a fossil fuel burning heater or appliance, a fireplace, or an attached garage.

This bill would require any private or public school building used for educational purposes for kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, that is built or modernized on or after January 1, 2014, and that has a fossil fuel burning furnace located inside the school building building, to have a carbon monoxide device. The bill would define “modernized” as a rehabilitation project that has an estimated total cost in excess of \$200,000 and would require that the carbon monoxide device be installed in close proximity to each furnace located within the school building.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

3 (a) (1) Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas produced
4 when fuel, such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal, is burned.
5 Carbon monoxide can cause harmful health effects by reducing
6 the delivery of oxygen to the body’s organs, such as the heart,
7 brain, and tissues. The most common symptoms of carbon
8 monoxide poisoning are headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea,
9 vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. Long-term breathing of carbon
10 monoxide can affect the memory, brain function, behavior, and
11 cognition. According to the American Medical Association, carbon
12 monoxide is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in
13 the United States. Gas furnaces and other fuel-burning appliances
14 are common sources of carbon monoxide poisoning.

15 (2) The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
16 estimate that each year more than 400 Americans die from
17 unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning, more than 20,000 visit
18 the emergency room, and more than 4,000 are hospitalized due to
19 carbon monoxide poisoning. According to the United States
20 Environmental Protection Agency, a person cannot see or smell
21 carbon monoxide. At high levels, carbon monoxide can kill a
22 person in minutes.

23 (3) The State Air Resources Board estimates that every year
24 carbon monoxide accounts for between 30 and 40 avoidable deaths,
25 possibly thousands of avoidable illnesses, and between 175 and
26 700 avoidable emergency room and hospital visits.

1 (4) There are well-documented chronic health effects of acute
2 carbon monoxide poisoning and prolonged exposure to carbon
3 monoxide, including, but not limited to, lethargy, headaches,
4 concentration problems, amnesia, psychosis, Parkinson’s disease,
5 memory impairment, and personality alterations.

6 (b) In an analysis conducted by the National Fire Protection
7 Association of nonfire carbon monoxide incidents reported for the
8 year 2005, 250 carbon monoxide incidents were reported
9 nationwide in educational facilities. Of these, 150 incidents
10 occurred in school buildings used for preschool, kindergarten, or
11 grades 1 to 12, inclusive.

12 (c) (1) On December 3, 2012, Finch Elementary School in
13 Atlanta, Georgia, was evacuated after firefighters discovered a
14 carbon monoxide leak from the school’s furnace. Firefighters
15 responded to the school after reports came in that people at the
16 school were unconscious. Although no one was found unconscious,
17 firefighters found people sickened and, in total, 43 students and
18 10 adults were taken to the local hospital.

19 (2) The firefighters detected high and unsafe levels of carbon
20 monoxide near a furnace, and detected up to 1,700 parts per million
21 of carbon monoxide in other areas, a very high level of the gas.

22 (3) The State of Georgia did not require school facilities to have,
23 and Finch Elementary School did not have, carbon monoxide
24 detectors. Two states, Maryland and Connecticut, have passed
25 legislation requiring carbon monoxide detectors in school facilities.

26 (d) Senate Bill 183 of the 2009–10 Regular Session (Chapter
27 19 of the Statutes of 2010) requires a dwelling unit that is intended
28 for human occupancy and that has a fossil fuel burning heater or
29 appliance, a fireplace, or an attached garage to have a carbon
30 monoxide alarm, as specified.

31 (e) Because carbon monoxide affects individuals differently
32 and symptoms of exposure can mimic symptoms of common
33 ailments such as the influenza virus, it is difficult to quantify the
34 exact number of carbon monoxide incidents in school buildings
35 and it is highly probable that the number of carbon monoxide
36 incidents is underreported. Additionally, the number of carbon
37 monoxide incidents in schools will likely rise in future years as
38 school buildings and their infrastructure become outdated over
39 time. Carbon monoxide devices provide a vital, highly effective,
40 and low-cost protection against carbon monoxide poisoning and

1 these devices should be made available to every school in
2 California to help prevent students from being exposed to the
3 effects of carbon monoxide.

4 SEC. 2. Article 7 (commencing with Section 32080) is added
5 to Chapter 1 of Part 19 of Division 1 of Title 1 of the Education
6 Code, to read:

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8
9

Article 7. Carbon Monoxide Devices

10 32080. *For purposes of this article, the following definitions*
11 *shall apply:*

12 (a) *“Fossil fuel” has the same meaning as defined in Section*
13 *13262 of the Health and Safety Code.*

14 (b) *“Modernized” means a rehabilitation project that has an*
15 *estimated total cost in excess of two hundred thousand dollars*
16 *(\$200,000).*

17 ~~32080.~~

18 32081. (a) A private or public school building that is used for
19 educational purposes for kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12,
20 inclusive, that is built or modernized on or after January 1, 2014,
21 and that has a *fossil fuel burning* furnace located inside the school
22 ~~building~~ *building*, shall have a carbon monoxide device, as defined
23 in Section 13262 of the Health and Safety Code, installed in that
24 building.

25 (b) A private or public school used for educational purposes for
26 kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, that has a furnace
27 located inside the school building, and that was built or modernized
28 prior to January 1, 2014, is encouraged to have a carbon monoxide
29 device installed in the building.

30 32085. A carbon monoxide device installed pursuant to Section
31 ~~32080~~ 32081 shall be installed in close proximity to each furnace
32 located within the public or private school building so that the
33 device can accurately detect the leakage of carbon monoxide.