



# CITY OF ABERDEEN FIRE DEPARTMENT

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

RE: 2024-0227

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **13 RESIDENTS EVACUATED FROM APARTMENT BUILDING DUE TO CARBON MONOXIDE LEAK**

ABERDEEN, WA – On January 14, 2024, at 11:57 PM, the Aberdeen Fire Department responded to an apartment building located at 112 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Aberdeen for a report of a carbon monoxide alarm sounding. Upon arrival fire department units quickly identified the presence of extremely elevated levels of carbon monoxide in the structure and worked to evacuate residents and made contact with Cascade Natural Gas for a company technician to respond.

Carbon monoxide is the byproduct of combustion in gas fueled appliances such as hot water tanks, heating furnaces, stoves/ovens and clothes dryers. It is a colorless, odorless, tasteless and explosive poisonous gas.

The normal level of carbon monoxide in a building equipped with gas-powered appliances is around 10 parts per million (ppm). Readings throughout the building ranged from 80 to 800 ppm. At 75 ppm occupants will begin to experience symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, fatigue, and difficulty concentrating. Increased levels can lead to additional symptoms of nausea and impaired mental function. Levels as high as the 800 ppm found in this building can lead to seizures, severe headaches, vomiting and even unconsciousness. As the level increases above the 800 ppm, those exposed run the risk of death.

This incident illustrates the need for a working carbon monoxide alarm in occupancies with gas-powered appliances. These alarms can detect the poisonous gas and help to provide an early warning. If your alarm sounds, it is important that you leave the area and get fresh air as soon as possible. Once evacuated and in a safe location, call 911. Once outside, stay outside until it is safe for you to return.

It was identified during this incident that at least three (3) of the apartment units had the batteries removed from their carbon monoxide detectors. At least one resident reported that they had removed the batteries because the detectors “wouldn’t stop going off.”

A total of 13 residents were temporally displaced while the structure was ventilated. Fire Department and Cascade Natural Gas crews remained on scene until 2:42 AM when the

residents were allowed to return to their apartments once carbon monoxide levels were reduced to an acceptable level.

The cause of the leak was found to be improperly installed natural gas-powered hot water tanks in the basement of the apartment building. The natural gas to the building was shut off until a repair can be made. Luckily, the natural gas to this building only serviced the hot water tanks and not the heating system, especially with the record low temperatures the area has been experiencing.

Please contact the Aberdeen Fire Department for any further information.

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