

# Mastering the 10-Minute Mini-Lesson

SAMPLE  
LESSON  
PLAN

## CO ALARMS IN THE HOME

### Educational Messages to Review:

- 3.1 Dangers of Carbon Monoxide
- 3.2 Installation
- 3.3 Testing & Replacement
- 3.8 If Your Carbon Monoxide Alarm Sounds

**Topic:** Carbon Monoxide Alarms in the Home

**Audience:** Adult Attendees of a City Council Meeting

**Lesson Objective:** By the end of the mini-lesson, participants will be able to describe at least 3 actions to ensure carbon monoxide alarms can serve as life-saving warning devices.

### Step 1: Introduction (3 Minutes)

- Greet the participants and let them know you appreciate the invitation to speak for 10 minutes.
- Introduce yourself and share your connection to the community.
- **HOOK:** Play the sound clip of the singing canary.
  - Ask audience members to identify the sound.
  - Share a brief bit of history about the role canaries once held in coal mines:

Poor ventilation is a problem in coal mines. Miners once used canaries to test the air quality in the mines. Canaries are very sensitive to the dangerous gases sometimes found in the mines. The canaries would chirp and sing all day long. But, if the levels of poisonous gases got too high, the canaries would have trouble breathing, and maybe even die. When the canaries stopped singing, miners would know that the gas levels were unsafe. They would leave the mine quickly to avoid suffocation or being caught in an explosion.

- Some miners relied on canaries as early warning devices into the 1980's.
- Modern technology has provided miners with new tools to detect the poisonous gases in mines.
- Modern technology has also provided us with a tool to detect carbon monoxide that could be in our homes.

### Step 2: Body of the Presentation (5 minutes)

- Inform the group about the topic of the mini-lesson: The importance of having working carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in the home.
- Share the following points with the participants:
  - Carbon Monoxide is not only found in coal mines. It is a gas that can come from heating and cooking devices in the home. Carbon monoxide is poisonous. It can make a person feel sick and can be deadly.
  - Carbon Monoxide is sometimes called "The Invisible Killer."
    - **ASK:** Why do you think CO has this morbid nickname? *CO is odorless and colorless. People are usually not aware of its presence and can get sick or die from breathing the poisonous gas.*
    - Since we cannot see, smell, or taste CO, we need to rely on another early warning system — like a canary in the coal mine.
  - Carbon Monoxide alarms act as canaries in the coal mine. These alarms detect this poisonous gas and provide early warning.



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## — Mastering the 10-Minute Mini-Lesson: CO Alarms in the Home —

- Inform participants about steps to take to ensure CO alarms are protecting people in the home:
  - Have working CO alarms in the home.
  - Install CO alarms outside sleeping areas and on every level of the home.
  - Follow the instructions on the package for proper installation and maintenance.
  - Test the CO alarms monthly.
  - Know the sounds the CO alarm makes. The alarm will sound if CO is detected. If the battery is low, the alarm will chirp. Replace the battery right away. If the alarm still sounds, call the fire department.
    - Press the test button on a CO alarm to demonstrate the sound.
    - ASK: Can CO alarms substitute for smoke alarms? *NO! You need both in the home. Know the difference between the sound of the smoke alarms and the sound of CO alarms.*
- ASK: What should you do if CO is detected?
  - *Immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors.*
  - *Make sure everyone in the home gets to fresh air.*
  - *Call the fire department from a fresh air location.*
  - *Stay there until help arrives.*

### Step 3: Conclusion (2 minutes)

- Remind participants of the importance of having working Carbon Monoxide alarms in the home
- Ask a few review questions:
  - How is a CO alarm like a canary in the coal mine? (*early warning, can reduce injury & death*)
  - What actions do you need to take to keep CO alarms working properly?
  - What actions should be taken if CO is detected in the home?
- Remind the audience that simple steps will help increase safety in the home.
- Share your contact information and encourage participants to contact you if they have questions or concerns about other home safety issues.
- Thank everyone for their time and for inviting you to speak.

The [\*\*NFPA Tip Sheet on Carbon Monoxide Safety\*\*](#) is a great take-away for participants to review at home.



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