

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon Monoxide is Deadly

What is Carbon Monoxide (CO)?

- CO is a poisonous gas produced by incomplete combustion of common fuels
- CO is odourless, colourless, tasteless and non-irritating
- CO prevents blood from carrying oxygen to the body's vital organs

Sources of CO

- Poorly maintained furnace or water heater
- Charcoal grills
- Wood or coal burning stove, heater or fireplace
- All gasoline powered vehicles, lawnmowers, snow blowers, etc.
- Kerosene stoves or heaters

Warning Signs of Potential CO Problems

- Stale or stuffy air
- Excessive moisture on windows and walls
- Soot buildup around appliances and vents
- A yellow flame in a natural gas appliance rather than blue
- A pilot light that will not stay lit
- A CO alarm is activated

Symptoms of CO Poisoning

- Dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting
- Fatigue, burning eyes, loss of muscle control
- Long exposure to high concentration of CO can lead to unconsciousness, brain damage and death

CO Poisoning Prevention

- Ensure all fuel burning appliances are properly installed and maintained
- Fuel burning appliances should be inspected annually by qualified personnel
- Combustion air sources must not be blocked or plugged
- Never leave motors running inside a garage or any enclosure
- Install a listed labeled (ULC, CSA) CO alarm

Treating symptoms of CO Poisoning

- Get outside and get fresh air
- Seek immediate attention. Call for help from a neighbor's home
- Have the problem repaired by qualified personnel

You can't see it, smell it or taste it.

Carbon monoxide poisoning is a subject people know very little about. Not only can it kill you, it can cause permanent neurological damage in the long term. In the short term, it can make you feel ill and inhibit your life potential.

Here's what to do to protect yourself. Please read all of the 10 steps to the end. It may be that the following five minutes could save your life or the life of someone else.

1. Check the flame colour of your appliances; if it's orange you have a problem. However, blue does not necessarily mean it is safe. Have your appliances checked annually and purchase a detector if unsure.
2. Check the flue; is it blocked? Do you have birds nesting in your flue? Completely remove these obstructions from the flue area and fit a guard to stop any birds nesting. Get your flue checked! Was it fitted correctly in the first place?
3. Do you have a horizontal gas grill? They can be particularly hazardous. Is yours working correctly? Older appliances can be problematic; use the electric toaster instead. Have your cooker checked.
4. Is there adequate ventilation? If the appliances in your home do not have enough air, they will produce carbon monoxide.
5. When were your appliances last checked? Do it every year; don't leave it to chance. Remember, a qualified person can only check the conditions on the day that he attends. Protect yourself year round; purchase a carbon monoxide detector.
6. Do you suffer from unexplained illnesses?
 1. Fatigue
 2. Muscle pains
 3. Upset stomach
 4. Lethargy
 5. Dizziness
 6. Headaches

Get medical attention from your local doctor or hospital

7. Are you a tenant? Does your landlord annually check the appliances in your accommodation? Has your landlord fitted a CO Detector?
8. Are you a landlord? Have you been carrying out statutory checks? Even if you have, you may be liable if one of your tenants becomes ill or, worse, dies. Fit a detector for both your own and your tenants' peace of mind. As a landlord, it is your responsibility to show due diligence.
9. We all feel better on holiday. If you feel especially invigorated, it may be that you have been removed from the source of the poison. If your health goes into decline on your return, it may not be just post holiday blues! You may be suffering the ill effects of being poisoned by carbon monoxide in your home.

10. The most important thing you can do to protect yourself and your family from the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning is to purchase and install a carbon monoxide detector.