



Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide, or CO, is a colorless, odorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death. It can be found in carbon-based fuels used in gas appliances, cars and trucks, and is a by-product of burning wood, charcoal, gas or oil. Common symptoms of CO poisoning are flu-like symptoms such as dizziness, fatigue, headaches, and nausea. High levels of CO can result in loss of consciousness and death.

Health and Environmental Effects: Carbon monoxide enters the bloodstream through the lungs and reduces oxygen delivery to the body's organs and tissues. The health threat from CO is most serious for those who suffer from cardiovascular disease. At higher levels of exposure, healthy individuals are also affected. Visual impairment, reduced work capacity, reduced manual dexterity, poor learning ability, and difficulty in performing complex tasks are all associated with exposure to elevated CO levels.

Sources include: Improperly vented gas furnaces and stoves, Exhaust from vehicles and machinery, Home water heaters, Portable generators, Pool heaters, Recreational boating, Wood stoves, Kerosene heaters, Charcoal fires, Sterno fuel, Fireplaces and Smoking.

Prevention:

Have gas appliances checked annually by a professional

Avoid the use of kerosene heaters indoors or in tents.

Do not use gas powered machinery in areas with poor ventilation.

Never use a generator in an enclosed space, attached garage, or near open windows. Follow all manufacturer instructions for placement.

Do not swim behind boats that have their engines or generators running.

Never idle your car or lawnmower in the garage, even if the garage door is open.

Never use charcoal grills, portable generators or kerosene heaters indoors, on balconies, near doors or next to vents or windows.

Never heat your home with a gas oven.

Ensure the car's tailpipe is clear of snow and other obstructions if anyone is inside of the vehicle.

Never ride in the covered back of a pickup truck. Carbon monoxide can enter the enclosed space and reach dangerous levels in a very short time.

Keep all chimneys and flues free of debris.

Install carbon monoxide detectors near sleeping areas in your home.

For more information on carbon monoxide, visit EPA's website at www.epa.gov/iaq/co.html

For additional information, or to schedule an inspection, please call (608) 434-0790

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