

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Carbon Monoxide alarms provide early warning of accumulating CO inside your home.



They should be installed in a central location outside of every sleeping area. CO Alarms should be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions, usually high up on a wall.

Test your CO Alarm regularly to insure it's working properly, and change the battery if needed. When the alarm sounds, leave the building and move to a position with plenty of fresh air. Call Emergency Services (911), and do not reenter the building until the responding Emergency Service Units tell you it's OK.

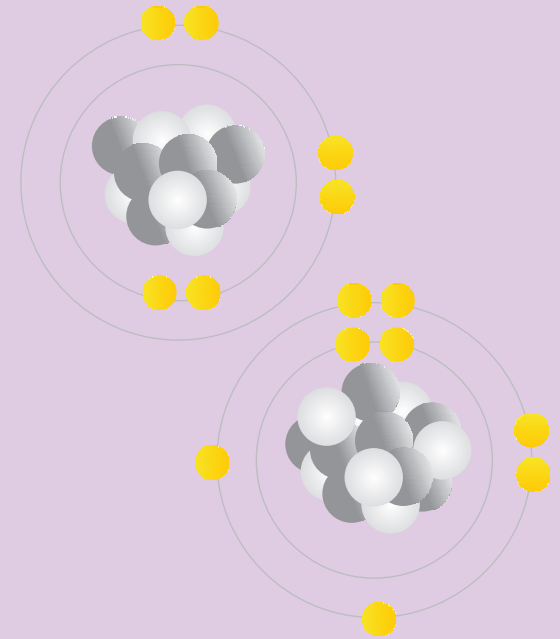


For more information contact:

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Carbon Monoxide

The Silent Killer



Department of Fire and Rescue Services
www.howardcountymd.gov

What is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas. It is produced by the incomplete burning of solid, liquid and gaseous fuels. Appliances fueled with natural gas, liquified petroleum (LP gas), oil, kerosene, coal or wood may produce CO. Even burning charcoal or running cars will produce CO.

What produces Carbon Monoxide?

Every year over 200 people in the United States die from CO produced by fuel-burning appliances (furnaces, ranges, water heaters, room heaters). Others die from CO produced while burning charcoal inside a home, garage, vehicle or tent. Still others die from CO produced by cars left running in attached garages. Several thousand people go to hospital emergency rooms for treatment for CO poisoning. CO rises to dangerous levels due to poor ventilation, better insulation in homes, incomplete combustion of fuels and incorrectly installed appliances. That is why it is important that you properly maintain the appliances in your home, and insure adequate ventilation in the building.

What is CO Poisoning?

Carbon Monoxide enters the lungs through normal breathing. Inside the lungs carbon monoxide interrupts the process by which oxygen enters the bloodstream. The lack of oxygen to the Brain, Heart and other vital organs affect their functioning, causing flu-like symptoms, minus the fever. Many people with CO poisoning mistake their symptoms for the flu or are misdiagnosed by physicians, sometimes resulting in death.

How much CO is dangerous?

Your overall health determines how quickly Carbon Monoxide will affect you. CO is especially dangerous to those at a higher risk: The elderly, pregnant women, young children, infants and pets. The level of damage caused also depends on the time and concentration (measured in parts per million or ppm) someone is exposed to. Most people won't be affected by anything below 70 ppm. As the concentration increases above 70, symptoms will begin to include headaches, fatigue and nausea. As the levels rise above 150 and 200, disorientation, unconsciousness and death may occur.

Prevention Tips

There are several steps you can take in order to protect yourself from the dangers of Carbon Monoxide:

- Have the heating system (including chimneys and vents) inspected and serviced annually.
- Install a CO detector/alarm near every sleeping area in the home, and make sure it cannot be covered up.
- Never burn charcoal inside a closed space.
- Never use portable fuel-burning camping equipment inside a closed space.
- Never leave a car running in a garage, even with the garage door open.
- Never service fuel-burning appliances without the proper knowledge, skill and tools. Always refer to the owner's manual when performing minor adjustments.
- Never use gas appliances such as ranges, ovens, or clothes dryers for heating your home.
- Never operate unvented fuel-burning appliances in any room with closed doors or windows or in any room where people are sleeping.
- Do not use gasoline-powered tools and engines (including generators) indoors.