

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon Monoxide Safety

Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning is usually caused by incomplete combustion and inadequate ventilation. Signs of buildup of this colorless, odorless gas include:

- Stuffy, stale or smelly air
- High humidity
- Soot from fireplaces or furnaces

Overexposure to carbon monoxide gas can cause headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, and loss of muscle control. Prolonged exposure can lead to unconsciousness, brain damage, and even death. The best treatment for overexposure is to get lots of fresh air and immediate medical attention.

To reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, gas and oil appliance manufacturers recommend a yearly safety check-up. A qualified heating contractor can perform this service.

To prevent accidental CO poisoning, keep the following tips in mind:

- Never operate a CO-producing engine or heating source in a confined area that lacks ventilation. Examples include leaving a vehicle running in a closed garage, operating a grill indoors, or leaving a cooking range on for warmth.
- Have heating systems, gas hot water heaters, and chimneys checked annually by qualified technicians or contractors.
- Install CO detectors (meeting UL standard #2034 requirements) above your home's furnace and outside bedrooms.
- If you suspect a CO problem with your furnace or water heater, call a qualified heating contractor immediately

