



Carbon Monoxide

Often called the silent killer, carbon monoxide (CO) is an invisible, odourless, colourless gas created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely.

In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel can be sources of CO. If your home has any type of solid fuel burning appliance, such as an oil or gas furnace, fireplace, gas range, etc. or if you have an attached garage, we recommend the installation of at least one Carbon Monoxide detector in your home in addition to your smoke alarm(s).

Common questions about CO

What are the symptoms of CO poisoning?

The symptoms are similar to the flu – nausea, headache, burning eyes, confusion and drowsiness – except there is no fever. If these symptoms appear, it is imperative to get everyone, including pets outside to fresh air immediately and call 911 and ask for the fire department.

How can I prevent CO poisoning?

Poor maintenance, damaged or blocked venting, improper use of appliance, or inadequate air flow can cause dangerous levels of CO to build up inside your home. The best way to ensure that you and your family are not exposed to CO is to eliminate it at the source. Make the maintenance of your fuel-burning appliances, equipment and venting systems an absolute priority.

Why should I install a CO detector?

After proper maintenance, CO alarms provide your second line of defense against CO poisoning. They will warn you of rising levels of CO, giving you and your family time to escape. Without CO alarms, the only way to know if CO is present is if the physical symptoms of CO poisoning become apparent. By then it might be too late!

Follow the tips below to ensure you have warning if CO is present in your home:

- CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
- Choose a CO alarm that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- If the audible trouble signal sounds, check for low batteries. If the battery is low, replace it.
- All CO alarms should be replaced every 5 years, whereas smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years.
- If the CO alarm sounds, immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors. Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for. Call for help from outside and stay there until emergency personnel say it is safe to return.
- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fuelled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open.
- A generator should be used in a well-ventilated location outdoors away from windows, doors and vent openings.
- Gas or charcoal grills can produce CO – only use outside.