

## What is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is an invisible, odorless, poisonous gas which can be fatal when inhaled.

CO is the number one cause of accidental poisoning deaths in the United States, causing over 2000 deaths and injuring more than 10,000 persons every year.

Everyone is susceptible to CO poisoning, but experts agree that unborn babies, young children, pregnant women, senior citizens and persons with heart or breathing problems are at greatest risk.

CO can be produced with incomplete combustion of any fuel, including gasoline, propane, natural gas, wood, coal or oil. CO kills by inhibiting the blood's ability to carry oxygen.

CO can kill in minutes if present in high concentration, or in hours in low concentrations.

**There are only two ways to know if CO is present in your home -- one is to become ill and possible die, and the other way is to install a CO alarm!**

## Install a Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarm

The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that every residence with a fuel burning appliance should be equipped with a CO alarm. The alarm should be UL 2034 certified, which means that it is the most accurate and reliable available.

Buildings with attached garages should also be equipped with CO alarms. Alarms should be installed on every level normally occupied by people, especially sleeping levels. In Nassau County, CO alarms are required in all new residential constructions, and will soon be required in all hotels and motels.

## What to do if your CO alarm goes off

If you or your family have symptoms, immediately leave your home and get everyone into fresh air. **Call 911**. Do not re-enter your home until help has arrived and the problem has been identified and corrected. If you are not experiencing symptoms, open your windows, air out your house, contact your utility company and make sure the source of CO is identified and eliminated.

## Symptoms of CO Poisoning

**Initial symptoms** are similar to the flu, with the absence of fever.

They may include: dizziness, confusion, fatigue, headache, nausea or sleepiness.

**Extreme exposure symptoms** may include: convulsions, unconsciousness, brain damage, heart and lung failure or death.

**For More Information Call the  
Department of Health at  
516-571-3737**

## To reduce your change of exposure to carbon monoxide:

- ◆ Install a CO alarm in your home.
- ◆ Never ignore or disconnect your CO alarm.
- ◆ Install and operate fuel-burning appliances according to manufacturer's instructions and local building codes. (Most of these types of appliances should be installed by professionals and inspected after installation.)
- ◆ Choose fuel-burning appliances which can be vented to the outdoors.
- ◆ Have your heating system, vents, chimney and flue inspected and cleaned by a qualified technician each year. Regularly check them for improper connections, visible rust and stains.
- ◆ Never use your barbecue indoors or in your garage.
- ◆ Never leave your car running in your garage.
- ◆ Address problems as soon as they appear: Decreasing hot water supply, sooting, yellow or orange flames in gas appliances, loose panels or vent pipes, unfamiliar odors or constantly running furnaces are all possible signs of problems which could produce CO in your home.

## Common Sources of CO

- ◆ Improperly operating fireplace
- ◆ Improperly installed gas range or vent
- ◆ Car left running in attached garage
- ◆ Corroded or disconnected water heater vent pipe
- ◆ Operating grill indoors in garage
- ◆ Portable fuel-burning space heater