



CARBON MONOXIDE: What you need to know and the action you must take TODAY

Preventing carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning in your home is simple and the steps you need to take to protect your family are not complicated. TAKE THE FIRST PROACTIVE STEPS TO KNOW MORE ABOUT IT.

PREVENTION FIRST

Gas fueled and wood burning appliances (fuel-burning), vehicles, and even power tools with internal combustion engines can produce carbon monoxide (CO)

To keep your fueling-burning appliances (furnace, fireplace, clothes dryer, water heater etc...) friends and not foes make sure they are running properly by having them inspected and maintained every year by a licensed or certified technician.

During and after a winter snowstorm and after a summer storm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are cleared of snow and debris. At no time should the vent on gas or wood fueled appliance be blocked.

Move a motor vehicle out of the garage and make sure the exhaust pipe is pointed away from any dwelling if you are warming it up. A motor vehicle's exhaust can produce carbon monoxide levels of up to 7,000 ppm.

Never use your oven or stove to heat your home.

For some anglers during the winter their fish house is there second home. Just like their home on land their lake home should be safe. Fish houses should have a working carbon monoxide detector. Wood stoves and fuel fired portable heaters need to have ventilation. Keep a window or the door slightly open.

CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

Carbon monoxide alarms as well as smoke alarms are not purchases where you should pinch pennies. While comparing prices is always a good practice, there are safety features in some CO (Carbon monoxide) alarms that are worth the extra expense.

Avoid dual CO and smoke alarms. It is optimal to purchase smoke alarms, CO alarms, gas detectors, and radon detectors as individual units. They will perform better, have fewer false alarms, and are easier to replace. Most CO alarms must be replaced every 3-5 years (although some have a life span of up to 10 years), and smoke alarms must be replaced every 8-10 years.

CO alarms should have 2 power sources. They can be hardwired into your home and/or plugged into an outlet and should have a battery back up in case of power outages.

Purchase CO alarms that have a digital readout.

CO alarms should be within 10 feet of bedrooms and sleeping areas. Many people put them close to fuel fired appliances thinking the alarm will detect the CO sooner, but they should be where they will be heard at night when people are sleeping.

Follow manufactures instructions when installing a CO alarm. Read the manufacturer's instructions and know how your CO alarm works. Keep the instructions in a place you can find then for easy reference.

Know the sounds the CO alarm makes. It will make one sound if CO is detected, and it will make a different sound if the battery is low or if it is time to get a new CO alarm.

CO alarms should be tested monthly and have the batteries changed when you change your smoke alarm batteries in the spring and fall.

One tip on how to remember to test you alarm once a month: Test when you make your rental or mortgage payment. Make the payment to keep the roof over your families head and test the CO alarms to keep the people under the roof safe.

IT'S THE LAW TO INSTALL AND MAINTAIN CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS IN YOUR HOME OR RENTAL PROPERTY.

Minnesota State Law requires that single family and multiple family dwellings have at least one operational carbon monoxide alarm within 10 feet of every room legally used for sleeping (see Minnesota Statute, 299F.50). All carbon monoxide alarms should be certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory to conform to the latest Underwriters Laboratory (UL) Standards

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU SUSPECT CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING OR THE CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM SOUNDS:

Get outside and stay outside.

Call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or neighbor's phone.

Remain outside until emergency responders arrive. They will be able to advise you on reentrance of your home.

DO NOT TRY TO FIND THE SOURCE OF THE CARBON MONOXIDE.

EARLY SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Headache
- Shortness of breath, sometimes occurring during exertion
- Weakness
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Drowsy
- Flu like symptoms

Another sign can be everyone living in the dwelling has the same signs and symptoms and/or the same signs and symptoms came on at the same time.

If people who live in the home leave with a headache and the headache goes away while they are gone and then once they get home the headache returns, it is possible there is CO in the home.

Feeling better when you are away from home and signs and symptoms returning after you have been home is another indication that there may be a CO problem.

Those who are most affected or have additional signs and symptoms spend the most time in the home.

Symptoms occurring or getting worse shortly after the furnace turns on, or another fuel-burning device like an oven, fireplace, or clothes dryer is used is another indication there may be a problem. The symptoms occurring at the same time every day can be a sign of a CO issue.

If you notice your pets are drowsy or lethargic and/or have a lack in coordination, consider that there may be a CO issue. House pets are sometimes exposed to CO for longer periods of time because they do not leave the home for work or school. Pets maybe affected before humans.

CARBON MONOXIDE IS AN INVISIBLE, ODORLESS, AND TASTELESS POISON

You cannot smell, see, or taste carbon monoxide. If you smell rotten eggs there could be a gas leak in your home. If an unusual smell is coming from appliances the smell may indicate something is wrong with the appliance. It is possible that carbon monoxide poisoning may be a result of a malfunctioning appliance.

If you have a gas leak or suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, get outside and call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or neighbor's phone. Do not enter the home until you have been advised that it is safe.

TID BITS

Publications and videos will use the terms carbon monoxide detector and carbon monoxide alarm. In general, unless the information piece is specific to parts of the alarm/detector or specific to a topic, usually the terms are used interchangeably .

In publications and videos errors have been made and writing out CO as CO₂ or calling carbon monoxide “CO₂”. **Carbon dioxide, CO₂** is not the same as **carbon monoxide, CO**.

Created: January 20, 2015