

# CO Detectors

## Install a carbon monoxide alarm in your home today

As the weather turns colder, citizens need to be aware of an invisible killer that can seep through their home and cause serious injury or death.

The Excelsior Fire District recommends that every home have a Carbon monoxide detector in the hallway near bedrooms in each sleeping area. "A CO detector can wake you up and give you time to save your family. Check the batteries on your CO detector at the same time you check your smoke detector batteries each month and replace the batteries annually. A CO detector can cost as little as \$30.00. Your families' safety is worth any money spent on keeping them healthy and alive. Every year in Minnesota there is a death caused by CO poisoning and the CO detectors fly off of the shelves of local stores. Minnesotans should be pro-active about their family's safety and not wait for another's family's tragedy to protect their family.

*Each year, CO poisoning from heating systems, water heaters, and ranges and ovens kills about 1,000 people in the U.S. according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. These are tragedies that can be prevented by having a professional check these appliances annually for proper operation and CO leaks.*

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that can be produced by burning fuels such as natural gas, propane, oil, kerosene, coal, or wood. Properly installed and operating fuel-burning appliances pose minimal CO hazards. However, under certain conditions, all appliances that burn fuels can leak deadly levels of CO into the home.

The initial symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning are similar to flu (but without the fever) and include headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea and dizziness. Exposure to high levels of CO can cause death.

To help prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisonings, the Excelsior Fire District urges citizens to have a yearly professional inspection of all fuel-burning heating systems, including furnaces, boilers, fireplaces, water heaters, space heaters, chimneys, flues, and vents. They check chimneys, flues, and vents for leakage, adequate ventilation, and blockage by debris. Birds, other animals and insects can build nests in vents over spring and summer, resulting in blockages that cause deadly exhaust to enter the home. An inspector also makes sure that flues, chimneys, and vents are not loose or disconnected and they check appliance operation to ensure proper fuel input rate, gas pressure, and operating temperatures.

A supply of fresh air is important to help carry pollutants up the chimney, stovepipe or flue, and fresh air is necessary for the complete combustion of any fuel. Never block ventilation air openings and check the appliance filter to ensure it is clean. Make sure the appliance is operating on the fuel that it is designed to use. There should be a minimal clearance of 30 inches from all appliances using natural gas or has a pilot light. To convert an appliance to burn propane, hire a professional to do the modification.

Citizens should never use gasoline-powered generators or charcoal grills indoors or in attached garages because of the risk of CO poisoning: opening doors and windows or operating fans cannot supply adequate ventilation and can be deadly. Use a generator outside in a dry area away from doors, windows, and vents that could allow CO to come indoors. Even with a CO alarm, NEVER use a gasoline-powered generator or a charcoal grill inside.

You can get more information by placing the phrase **Carbon Monoxide Safety** in your internet search engine.