

Carbon Monoxide

Why Should I Care About Carbon Monoxide?

It Kills.

Many Canadians die every year from carbon monoxide poisoning in their own homes, most of them while sleeping.

It Injures.

Hundreds of Canadians are hospitalized every year from carbon monoxide poisoning, many of whom are permanently disabled. Everyone is at Risk - 88% of all homes have something that poses a carbon monoxide threat.

Carbon Monoxide is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, toxic gas that enters the body through the lungs during the normal breathing process. It replaces oxygen in the blood and prevents the flow of oxygen to the heart, brain and other vital organs

Where does Carbon Monoxide Come From?

Produced when carbon-based fuels are incompletely burned such as:

- Wood
- Propane
- Natural Gas
- Heating Oil
- Coal
- Kerosene
- Charcoal
- Gasoline

What Are the Main Sources of Carbon Monoxide in my Home?

Wood burning/gas stoves, gas refrigerators, gasoline engines, kerosene heaters and others.

How Can I Tell if There is a Carbon Monoxide Leak in my Home?

- Personally
- Headache, nausea, burning eyes, fainting, confusion, drowsiness.
- Often mistaken for common ailments like the flu
- Symptoms improve when away from the home for a period of time

- Symptoms experienced by more than one member of the household.
- Continued exposure to higher levels may result in unconscious, brain damage and death.
- The elderly, children and people with heart or respiratory conditions may be particularly sensitive to carbon monoxide.

Environment

- Air feels stale/stuffy
- Excessive moisture on windows or walls
- Sharp penetrating odor or smell of gas when furnace or other fuel burning appliance turns on.
- Burning and pilot light flames are yellow/orange, not blue
- Pilot light on the furnace or water heater goes out
- Chalky white powder or soot build up occurs around exhaust vent or chimney.

How Can I protect Myself and my Family?

- Regularly maintained appliances that are properly ventilated should not produce hazardous levels of carbon monoxide
- Have a qualified service professional inspect your fuel burning appliance(s) at least once per year.
- Have your chimney inspected and cleaned every year by a W.E.T.T. certified professional.
- Be sure your carbon monoxide detector has been certified to the Canadian Standard Association (CSA) CAN/CGA 6.19 standard or the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) 2034 standard.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector in or near the sleeping area(s) of the home.
- Install the carbon monoxide detector(s) in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

What Should I Do if my Carbon Monoxide Detector Starts Beeping?

ALWAYS REACT TO A CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR THAT HAS ALARMED!

To Keep Safe Please Remember:

You have a responsibility to know about the dangers of carbon monoxide. Your knowledge and actions may save lives.

A carbon monoxide detector is a good second line of defense. It is not a substitute for the proper care and maintenance of your fuel burning appliance(s). Take the time to learn about the use of carbon monoxide detectors in your home to ensure you are using the equipment properly and effectively.

Where To Install A Carbon Monoxide Detector

Since carbon monoxide moves freely in the air, the suggested location is in or as near as possible to sleeping areas of the home. The human body is most vulnerable to the effects of carbon monoxide during sleeping hours. To work properly the unit must not be blocked by furniture or draperies. Carbon Monoxide is virtually the same weight as air and therefore the alarm protects you in a high or low location.

For maximum protection, a carbon monoxide detector should be located outside primary sleeping areas, in sleeping areas and in each level of your home.

Where NOT to Install a CO Detector

Some locations may interfere with the proper operation of the alarm and may cause false alarms or trouble signals.

CO detectors should not be installed in the following locations:

- Where the temperature may drop below 4.4o C (40oF) or exceed 37.8oC (100oF).
- Near paint thinner fumes or household cleaning products. Ensure proper ventilation when using these types of chemicals.
- Within 1.5m (5 feet) of any cooking or open flame appliances such as furnaces, stoves and fireplaces.
- In exhaust streams from gas engines, vents, flues or chimneys.
- Do not place in close proximity to an automobile exhaust pipe; this will damage the detector.

Maintenance

Test your carbon monoxide detector regularly to make sure it is operating properly. The owner's manual should tell you how to test your alarm. Remember to check the manual for information on when to buy a new carbon monoxide detector.

If you have any questions regarding co safety, please contact the fire department.