



CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

Protect Yourself from Carbon Monoxide Poisoning After an Emergency

Never use generators, grills, camp stoves, or other gasoline, propane, natural gas, or charcoal-burning devices inside your home, basement, garage, or camper—or even outside near an open window.

Install a carbon monoxide detector in your house, and check its battery every time you check your smoke detector batteries.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death if you breathe it. When power outages occur during emergencies such as hurricanes or winter storms, you may try to use alternative sources of fuel or electricity for heating, cooling, or cooking. CO from these sources can build up in your home, garage, or camper and poison the people and animals inside.

If you are too hot or too cold, or you need to prepare food, don't put yourself and your family at risk—look to friends or a community shelter for help. If you must use an alternative source of fuel or electricity, be sure to use it only outside and away from open windows.

Every year, more than 500 people die from accidental CO poisoning. CO is found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by small gasoline engines, stoves, generators, lanterns, and gas ranges, or by burning charcoal and wood. CO from these sources can build up in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces.

People and animals in these spaces can be poisoned and can die from breathing CO in an enclosed or partially enclosed space.

How to Recognize CO Poisoning

Exposure to CO can cause loss of consciousness and death. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. People who are sleeping or who have been drinking alcohol can die from CO poisoning before ever having symptoms. If you think you may have CO poisoning, consult a health care professional right away.

Important Tips

- Never use a gas range or oven to heat a home.
- Never use a charcoal grill, hibachi, lantern, or portable camping stove inside a home, tent, or camper.
- Never run a generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed structure, even if the doors or windows are open, unless the equipment is professionally installed and vented. Keep vents and flues free of debris, especially if winds are high. Flying debris can block ventilation lines.
- Never run a motor vehicle, generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine outside an open window or door where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area.
- Never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a closed garage.

For more information, visit www.bt.cdc.gov
or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (English and Spanish) or 888-232-6348 (TTY).

January 5, 2005

Page 1 of 1