

Be alert for CO poisoning



Carbon monoxide (CO) is a leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in the U.S.

CO is a poisonous, colorless, odorless and tasteless gas produced when propane, wood, heating oil, natural gas or other fuels burn without sufficient oxygen. CO can build up in enclosed areas quickly, exposing victims to harmful or even fatal levels without their realizing it. Children and the elderly are the most likely to get sick from CO exposure.

Most CO poisoning incidents are due to improper equipment installation, maintenance or use. Here are some possible sources of dangerous CO levels:

- A vehicle running in an enclosed garage
- A generator running indoors, or outdoors within 20 feet of a door, window or vent
- A gas range or oven used for heating
- Fuel-burning space heating or water heating equipment inadequately vented
- A propane camping stove, charcoal barbecue or kerosene lantern used indoors
- A fireplace with a blocked chimney or vent pipe
- Equipment or appliance with a blocked exhaust vent
- Smoldering insulation on overheated electrical wires

When you suspect CO poisoning, take everyone outside into the fresh air. Seek medical attention for the victims immediately.



Signs of CO poisoning

Watch for these common signs of CO poisoning:

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Confusion
- Sleepiness
- Tight chest

Responding to an incident involving CO

If a CO incident is reported in a building served by natural gas, notify National Grid or the local gas utility and take these steps:

- **Use full SCBA and PPE.**
- **Evacuate the building.**
- **Make sure victims get fresh air and immediate medical attention.**
- **Shut off the gas at the aboveground service valve before the meter,** provided you have been trained to do so.
- **Work with National Grid to determine the source of the carbon monoxide** and when it is safe for occupants to return.
- **Exercise extreme caution. CO is highly flammable** and will ignite when its concentration is 12 to 74 percent gas in air.
- **If possible, carry a CO meter** to help you identify the presence of CO.



CO alarms save lives

CO poisoning can be prevented with the installation of CO alarms, which are required in private dwellings in New York, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends installing a CO alarm in the hallway outside every separate sleeping area of a home.

For more safety information and training, visit firstresponder.ngridsafety.com.
To report emergencies, call 911 and National Grid immediately.