

C Carbon Monoxide O xide

Its presence can kill you.

Carbon monoxide (often referred to as CO)

is a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas. If you breathe in too much carbon monoxide, it can cause serious and potentially fatal damage. CO poisoning is a leading cause of accidental deaths.

Carbon monoxide is produced by common household appliances that burn fuel such as gas, oil, propane, kerosene, wood, or charcoal. These appliances include:

- Furnaces
- Fuel-burning space heaters
- Barbecue grills
- Cooking ranges
- Water heaters
- Fireplaces
- Portable generators
- Wood-burning stoves

If you maintain and properly use fuel-burning appliances, the amount of CO produced is usually not hazardous. However, if appliances aren't kept in good working order or if they're used in closed or confined spaces, then carbon monoxide can build up to dangerous levels.

Simple precautions to minimize the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Have a certified fuels technician inspect and maintain your gas or oil furnace equipment annually.
- Check that outside furnace vents are not blocked.
- Install a CO alarm (on every floor level).
- If you own a battery-operated CO alarm, change the batteries regularly. Fall is a good time to get into this safe habit.
- Never use a fuel-burning appliance or device in an enclosed space.
- Use your barbecue outdoors only, in well-ventilated areas.
- Know the symptoms of CO poisoning – they are similar to the flu, except there is no fever.



Want to know more? Visit COsafety.ca and get valuable advice on safety issues surrounding carbon monoxide, including tips, checklists and other links to safety information.

