

ACTIONS TO TAKE

It is important to remember that in an emergency you need to stay calm and focused. In order to determine if you or your family might have CO poisoning you need to ask if anyone is feeling sick or ill, if they feel like they have the flu, and if they feel better once they go outside for some fresh air. If anyone answered yes to any of the questions then it is important to evacuate the house immediately to your outside meeting place and have someone call 9-1-1 from a neighbors house or cell phone.

By being prepared you can help save yourself and your family. Make sure you do the following:

- Make sure appliances are installed according to manufactures installation
- Have heating systems, chimney, and vents inspected and serviced annually
- Purchase and install CO detector(s)
- Discuss with family the symptoms and what to do regarding CO.

CLUES YOU CAN SEE



- Rusting or water streaking on vent/chimney
- Loose or missing furnace panel
- Sooting
- Loose or disconnected vent/chimney connection
- Debris or soot falling from chimney, fireplace, or appliance
- Loose masonry on chimney
- Moisture inside of windows

OTHER SAFETY FEATURES

that are important to have in your home include:

Working smoke alarms (detectors) on every level and in bedrooms



Fire extinguisher



Fire escape plan that is posted and rehearsed by all family members



Have an escape plan



**SAN BERNARDINO
COUNTY FIRE
DEPARTMENT**

**CARBON MONOXIDE
Are YOU at risk?**



**FIRE SAFETY
We all take part**

What's inside:

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Carbon Monoxide: Definition and Symptoms

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is referred to as the “Silent Killer” because it is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas that is produced by burning fuel. Therefore, any fuel-burning appliance in your home is a potential CO source. Fuel burning appliances that are maintained and used properly will help reduce CO to non-hazardous levels. CO is a relatively weightless gas which rises to the ceiling similar to smoke. Increased standards in energy efficiency has led to homes being tightly sealed. These “closed-in” homes do not allow fresh air to enter, which makes the situation more serious when CO is present.

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The initial symptoms of CO are similar to the flu (but without the fever), food poisoning, or other illnesses. Symptoms can include dizziness, fatigue, headache, nausea, and irregular breathing. If you experience these symptoms and feel better once you go outside and then they reappear once inside you may have CO poisoning. It is critical that you go outside and call 9-1-1; high levels of CO are fatal.


Sources


CO producing devices commonly in use around the home include:


 **Charcoal grill:** the smoke from burning charcoal contains high levels of CO. When grills are brought in as a heat source within enclosed spaces it can be lethal.


 **Clothes dryer:** Gas dryers are a potential source of CO when their exhaust hose becomes disconnected or used as a heat source.


Furnace/Water heater/Space heater: Incorrectly adjusted or vented equipment may spread deadly CO into the home, they should be serviced regularly. 

Stoves: People mistakenly believe that since stoves do not burn fuel that are safe; however when used to heat the home the exhaust from stoves mix with the air in the home and can be dangerous. 

 **Fireplaces:** Flues and chimneys need to be checked yearly so they won't become blocked by debris; also if the flue does not produce enough of an updraft to pull toxic CO up and out, then CO may stay in the home.

 **Gas-powered equipment:** should always be used outside in a well ventilated area.

 **Vehicles:** Starting your vehicle in the garage with the door closed is a dangerous practice, this leads to deadly levels of CO.

Pets: Animals breathe faster than humans and have faster metabolic rates therefore they show effects of CO faster.  If a pet suddenly becomes ill or dies you should have the house checked for CO.

PLACEMENT:

There are many brands and types of CO detectors available; however it is important to buy one that is UL listed and works best for you. CO detectors should be placed on each floor, especially near the sleeping areas where there is a potential source of CO. They should be placed high, 6-12” either on the ceiling or wall, for best use. CO detectors should not be placed within 5’ of gas fueled appliances, near cooking or bathing areas, or next to garages.

As with smoke alarms (detectors) your CO detector should be routinely checked. Depending on the type of detector you will either have to replace sensors and/or batteries over the years.

