

Protect Your Home and Workplace From Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a highly toxic and poisonous gas. CO is colorless, odorless and tasteless so it is hard to detect. Since there are no warning signs specific to CO, you have no way of knowing if the gas is in your home or workplace. Because of this silent danger, it is important to be aware of prevention methods, detection, and signs and symptoms of CO poisoning to lessen the chance of the gas being present.



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Prevent CO Poisoning

To prevent CO poisoning, know the location of equipment and appliances, such as gas or kerosene heaters, that could produce CO gases. Ensure that any areas where CO may be accumulating are properly ventilated and only use home and workplace-approved heating equipment.

Detection Is Essential for Ensuring Safety

Make sure CO detectors are properly installed. Some detectors require a constant supply of power and others are battery powered. It is important to know which device is in use and to check that it is in a safe place. A proper place for a CO detector is five feet above the ground or on the ceiling of each room of the home or building. Some CO detectors are available as system-connected, monitored devices. System-connected detectors, which can be wired to either a security or fire panel, are monitored by a central station. Be sure to update and check each detector or system yearly to ensure it is working properly. The average lifespan of a non-system detector is about two years.

Signs and Symptoms of CO Poisoning

Carbon monoxide is harmful when breathed because it displaces oxygen in the blood and deprives the heart, brain and other vital organs of clean oxygen. Large amounts of CO can overcome a person in minutes without warning, causing loss of consciousness and suffocation.

Initial symptoms may include:

- Headache
- Exhaustion
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Rapid breathing
- Confusion
- Weakness

If someone is experiencing signs of CO poisoning, leave the area immediately and get fresh air. Seek prompt medical attention once you are away from the source.



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