
Can you tell—can you smell— what gas it is?

The poisonous gas that kills nearly 300 people in their homes each year has no smell. What's more, it has no taste and no color.

The gas is carbon monoxide (CO), and it is truly a "senseless" killer.

What is carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide is produced by burning any fuel. Therefore, any fuel-burning appliance in your home is a potential CO source.

When appliances are kept in good working condition, they produce little CO.

Improperly operating appliances can produce fatal CO concentrations in your home. Likewise, using charcoal indoors or running a car in a garage can cause CO poisoning.

What are the major sources of CO?

Carbon monoxide is produced as a result of incomplete burning of carbon-containing fuels, including coal, wood, charcoal, natural gas, and fuel oil. It can be emitted by combustion sources such as unvented kerosene and gas space heaters, furnaces, wood stoves, gas stoves, fireplaces, water heaters, automobile exhaust from attached garages, and tobacco smoke. Problems can arise as a result of improper installation, maintenance, or inadequate ventilation.

Symptoms of CO Poisoning

Carbon monoxide poisoning can kill you. The initial symptoms of CO are similar to the flu (but without the fever). They include:

Dizziness
Fatigue
Headache
Nausea
Irregular breathing

Remember, if you have any of these symptoms and if you feel better when you go outside your home and the symptoms reappear once you're back inside, you may have CO poisoning.

If you or anyone around you begins to feel these symptoms or sees them in others, evacuate the home or building to an area with fresh air.

Call 9-1-1. (We are here for your service. We would rather come to your home early than to come when it is too late.)

Clues You Can See

- ◆ Rusting or water streaking on vent/chimney
- ◆ Loose or missing furnace panel
- ◆ Sooting

- ◆ Loose or disconnected vent/chimney connections
- ◆ Debris or soot falling from chimney, fireplace, or appliance
- ◆ Loose masonry on chimney
- ◆ Moisture inside of windows

Clues You Cannot See

- ◆ Internal appliance damage or malfunctioning components
- ◆ Improper burner adjustment
- ◆ Hidden blockage or damage in chimneys

Sources of Carbon Monoxide

- ◆ Room heater
 - ◆ Furnace
 - ◆ Charcoal grill
 - ◆ Range
 - ◆ Water heater
 - ◆ Auto in closed garage
 - ◆ Fireplace
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What can I do?

1. Make sure appliances are installed according to manufacturer's instructions and local building codes. Most appliances should be installed by professionals.
2. Have the heating system (including chimneys and vents) inspected and serviced annually.
3. Follow manufacturer's directions for safe operation.
4. Examine vents and chimneys regularly for improper connections, visible rust, or stains.
5. Notice problems that could indicate improper appliance operation.
 - ◆ Decreasing hot water supply
 - ◆ Furnace unable to heat house or runs constantly
 - ◆ Sooting, especially on appliances
 - ◆ Unfamiliar or burning odor

Install a CO Detector for Added Safety

(Must meet the requirements of UL 2034)

Various types of CO detectors are available from retail outlets in Sioux Falls. There are:

- Battery-operated
- Plug-in
- Combination plug-in with battery back-up
- Hard-wired
- Stick-ups

What should I not do?

1. Never burn charcoal indoors or in a garage.
2. Never service appliances without proper knowledge, skills, and tools.
3. Never use the gas range or oven for heating.
4. Never leave a car running in a garage.
5. Never operate unvented gas-burning appliances in a closed room.

To report a product hazard or a product-related injury, write to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D.C., 20207, or call the toll-free hotline: 1-800-638-2772. A teletypewriter for the deaf is available at 1-800-638-8270.

For further information please contact the Fire Prevention Division at 367-8093.

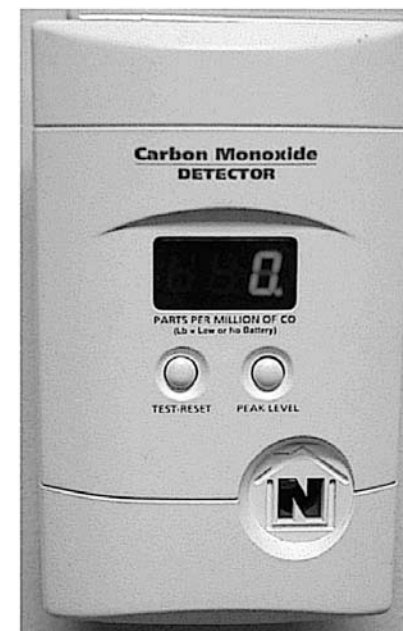


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Carbon Monoxide Detector Fact Sheet

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Sioux Falls Fire Rescue



Every year, nearly 300 people in the United States die from this toxic gas. (CPSC)