

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Every home should have properly installed and maintained carbon monoxide (CO) alarms. CO alarms can help detect CO, a colorless, odorless gas produced by burning any fuel. Exposure to high levels of CO can cause death. The initial symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to the flu and include dizziness, fatigue, headache, nausea, and irregular breathing.

- Install battery-operated CO alarms or plug-in CO alarms with battery back-up in your home, according to the manufacturer's installation instructions. CO alarms should be certified to the requirements of the latest safety standards for CO alarms (UL 2034, IAS 6-96, or CSA 6.19.01). It is especially important to have a CO alarm near sleeping areas.
- Test and maintain your CO alarms according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- If your carbon monoxide (CO) alarm sounds, immediately move to a fresh air location and call for help. Remain in the fresh air location until emergency personnel say it is ok.

Because of the risk of CO poisoning, never operate unvented fuel-burning appliances in any closed room or where people or animals are sleeping. CO poisoning from fuel-burning appliances kills people in the United States each year.

CO can leak from faulty furnaces or fuel-fired heaters or can be trapped inside a home by a blocked chimney or flue. Burning charcoal inside a home produces CO. Running an automobile engine in an attached garage can cause CO to enter a home and so can running a portable generator if it is near windows, doors, or vents, even if it is outdoors.

Never use gas appliances such as ranges, ovens, or clothes dryers for heating your home. **Never** use a portable generator in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, including in your home or in a garage, basement, crawl space, or other partially enclosed area, even with ventilation. Locate a generator outdoors and away from doors, windows, and vents that could allow CO to come indoors. Generators can produce high levels of deadly CO very quickly. (See [Portable Generators.](#))