

WHAT IS CO?

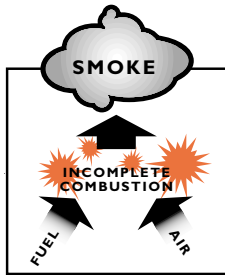
CO IS . . .

Carbon Monoxide is a toxic gas that can occur in homes and buildings. It is colourless, odorless, tasteless and non-irritating. CO is poison and can be deadly at high levels. At low concentrations, CO can go undetected and contribute to nagging illnesses. It can be compound pre-existing health problems and often times goes unblamed in premature deaths.



HOW CO IS PRODUCED

Carbon Monoxide is produced by the incomplete combustion of fuels. This occurs when there is not enough oxygen mixed with fuel. This is commonly referred to as a “rich mixture”. All fuel burning appliances have the potential to produce CO in varying concentrations. CO can result from improperly vented or malfunctioning combustion appliances such as furnaces, stoves and hot water heaters.

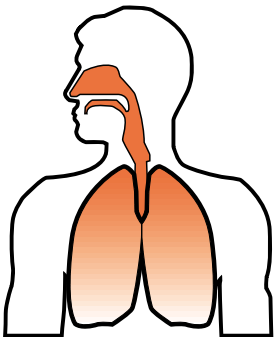


HOW CO AFFECTS THE BODY

Carbon Monoxide is inhaled into the lungs and bonds with hemoglobin in the blood to form carboxyhemoglobin (COHb). This condition limits the ability of the blood to carry oxygen and effects all major organs and muscles.

Extended exposure or brief high level exposure to CO can lead to unconsciousness, brain damage or death.

Early warning signs of CO poisoning are headaches, nausea, dizziness, shortness of breath and confusion.



High risk groups for CO poisoning include:

- Infants/Children
- Pregnant Women
- Elderly People
- Heart Patients
- Anyone who has trouble breathing
- Those with anemic conditions

COMMON SOURCES OF CO IN A RESIDENCE

There are many possible sources of carbon monoxide in a home:

- Unvented cooking appliances
- Wood burning fireplace
- Gas, oil, wood or coal furnace
- Chimney
- Water heater
- Gas Refrigerator
- Gas or oil space heaters
- Gas clothes dryer
- Barbecue grill
- Attached garage
- Tobacco smoke
- Pool/spa heaters
- Unvented heaters
- Ceiling mounted unit heaters

