



Carbon monoxide (CO) poses a serious threat to individuals both at home and on the job. **According to the CDC, each year more than 400 Americans die from unintentional CO poisoning, more than 20,000 people visit the emergency room, and more than 4,000 people are hospitalized.**

CO poisoning is the leading cause of poisoning deaths in the US. Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely.

### Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Confusion
- Blurred vision
- Loss of consciousness

If you, or people around you, are experiencing these symptoms it is important to get them and yourself out of the area.

**Being exposed to CO for an extended amount of time can cause irreversible brain damage and eventually death.**

### General Safety Tips

- Never burn charcoal indoors
- Never leave your car running in a garage or any poorly ventilated area
- Never heat your house with your stove: this can lead to a buildup of CO in your house

- Never use a generator inside your house.

### Illness Prevention

Avoid the situations mentioned above. Have gas-burning appliances and heaters regularly inspected by a professional to ensure there are no issues with using them in the workplace. Install carbon monoxide alarms on each floor of a building. The carbon monoxide alarms should be certified to the requirements of the latest safety standards for carbon monoxide alarms (UL 2034, IAS 6-96, or CSA 6.19.01). Test the alarms at least once a month and replace them according to the manufacturer's guidelines. People who are asleep or are intoxicated are very susceptible to CO poisoning and alarms are the only chance to alert them to danger before it is too late.

### Generator Safety

If not properly installed and operated, a portable generator can become a deadly device that kills via electric shock or carbon monoxide fumes.

**Using a generator indoors can kill you in minutes!**

**Never use a generator in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces.**

Generators can produce high levels of carbon monoxide very quickly. When you use a portable generator, remember that you cannot smell or see carbon monoxide.

Even if you can't smell exhaust fumes, you may still be exposed to it.

**Follow these work practices to stay safe when using a portable generator:**

- Follow the instructions that come with your generator.
- Inspect the generator for damage or loose fuel lines.

- Keep the generator dry and maintain and operate it according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Locate the unit outdoors and away from doors, windows, and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors. Never use a portable generator indoors, or in enclosed spaces such as garages, crawl spaces, and basements. Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent carbon monoxide build-up in the home.
- Generators should be used outdoors, but never place a generator near doors, windows, or ventilation shafts where CO can enter and build up.
- Make sure the generator has 3 to 4 feet of clear space on all sides and above it to ensure adequate ventilation.
- If you or others show symptoms of CO poisoning—dizziness, headaches, nausea/vomiting, tiredness, confusion, unconsciousness—get to fresh air immediately and seek medical attention. Do not re-enter the area until it is determined to be safe by trained and properly equipped personnel.