

As we enter cold weather season, it is important to keep heating systems properly serviced, inspected and tuned, and know precautions to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon Monoxide Dangers and Prevention Issues

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless gas that can cause illness and death. CO is found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by cars and trucks, small gasoline engines, stoves, lanterns, burning charcoal and wood, and gas ranges and heating systems. CO from these sources can build up in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. Breathing in high levels of CO can cause loss of consciousness and death.

While, in the United States, deaths due to carbon monoxide poisoning have declined over the past three decades (an estimated decline of 57.8 percent), CO poisoning is still recognized as a totally preventable occurrence.

CO poisoning can be prevented by taking some simple precautions, including:

- Properly install, maintain, and operate all fuel-burning appliances.
- Annually inspect all appliances that have internal combustion.
- Properly maintain all flues, chimneys, stacks, and ventilations systems.
- Do not operate un-vented fuel-burning space heaters unless the structure is properly vented and the heaters and CO levels are monitored.
- Annually inspect all exhaust systems.
- Never run a generator, pressure washer, or any portable fuel powered engine inside a structure.
- Never run a motor vehicle, generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine outside of an open window or door where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area.
- If an area of the structure has fugitive CO potential, if there are sleeping/ residential areas, and when required by code, CO detectors should be installed.
- Never ignore symptoms of CO Poisoning. If you suspect CO poisoning evacuate the structure and contact emergency services

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