



DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services

Carbon Monoxide Safety

FACTS

Heating equipment is the leading cause of CO incidents.

Most CO calls occur between 5pm and 10am.

97% of all CO incidents occur in residential buildings.

All CO detectors should have an approved manufacturer label, such as UL listing.

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FACTS ON CARBON MONOXIDE THAT CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

WHAT IS CO: It is a colorless toxic gas which is impossible to see, taste or smell. It is produced when the burning of common fuels such as wood, coal, charcoal, natural gas, gasoline, propane, heating oil and methane occurs. It is measured in PPM (parts per million). A concentration above 8ppm requires attention.

SYMPTOMS: CO Gas attaches itself to the body's hemoglobin (RBC) which will deplete the normal flow of oxygen into the body's bloodstream, and it can cause Flu-like symptoms.

Initial Symptoms of **LOW** to **MODERATE** levels: Headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea, and dizziness.

Symptoms of **HIGH** levels: Altered mental status, vomiting, unconsciousness and decrease muscular coordination.

Final Stage is **Death**

If you suspect a Carbon Monoxide Leak or Exposure---Immediately move outside to fresh air /do not reenter the atmosphere to find the source of leak/ Call 911 from a neighbor's home/ seek medical attention immediately.

PREVENTION IS THE KEY:

DO'S

- Do install CO detectors
- Always check home appliances especially in the wintertime, such as furnace, hot water heaters, chimneys, and flues for blockage
- Have your home appliances professionally serviced annually
- Install CO detectors on every level of the home including habitable areas such as the hallways outside sleeping quarters and finished basements
- Keep your clothes dryer, stove, and fireplace VENTS clean and clear

DON'T'S

- **Do not** use any gas-powered appliance in enclosed area such as the garage or inside the home
- **Do not** try to repair or fix any home heating appliance without proper knowledge
- **Do not** place ANY combustibles near the space heaters, hot water heaters and furnaces.
- **Do not** use a gas oven to heat the home
- **Do not** leave a vehicle running inside an attached garage
- **Do not** IGNORE any symptoms if suspected of CO exposure