

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

When a gas appliance functions properly it produces Carbon Dioxide (CO²) and water vapor as natural byproducts of combustion; however, in certain situations where a defect in the appliance exists or an improper appliance installation is allowed, deadly carbon monoxide gas (CO) can be present.

Carbon monoxide is not always evident in the home because it is colorless odorless and tasteless. When a person experiences mild to moderate carbon monoxide sickness he/she usually feels excessively tired or nauseous at home but better when outdoors in fresh air. If multiple people in the same household experience flu-like symptoms while fuel burning appliances are used, it is recommended that a professional check the home for CO.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

In addition to having a professional come into your home to check your appliances, you should have a carbon monoxide detector installed. Placement of this device should be close to areas you frequently occupy (such as, the bedroom(s) and living room). The detector will keep a constant watch over the levels of CO in the home throughout the year. Batteries in this device should be checked in accordance with manufacturer's instruction to ensure proper operation.

Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Mild carbon monoxide poisoning can easily be confused with the flu, food poisoning or other illnesses; however, the long term effects of even mild poisoning can be very detrimental to health. That's why it is better to recognize the symptoms as early as possible. Some of the symptoms are:

- Shortness of breath
- Mild nausea
- light headaches

Moderate levels of CO exposure can cause death when an individual is exposed for a long period of time. These symptoms include.

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Light-headedness

High levels of CO can be fatal causing death within minutes. If the symptoms are not accompanied by fever, if everyone in the family is ill, or if the symptoms disappear when you leave the house, it could be CO poisoning.

What to do if you suspect CO poisoning.

If carbon monoxide poisoning is suspected, get affected persons into an area of fresh air immediately (preferably outside) and call 911.

