



# Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Tips

Everything you need to know to keep your family safe from carbon monoxide.

Fuel-powered devices can provide wonderful benefits to families when used properly. But they also underscore an important necessity in the home: the need for a carbon monoxide alarm. Carbon monoxide poisoning can result from faulty furnaces or other heating appliances, portable generators, water heaters, clothes dryers, or cars left running in garages. At its worst, carbon monoxide can cause severe side effects or even death.

## Install Carbon Monoxide Alarms

- Make sure your home has a carbon monoxide alarm. If you don't have one, please go out and get one.
- As with smoke alarms, make sure you have a carbon monoxide alarm on every level of your home, especially near sleeping areas, and keep them at least 15 feet away from fuel-burning appliances.
- You won't know that you have a carbon monoxide leak without a working alarm. So test alarms regularly and replace them every five to seven years depending on the manufacturer's label.
- For the best protection, have carbon monoxide alarms that are interconnected throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Carbon monoxide alarms are not substitutes for smoke alarms, and vice versa. Combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are available.



## Understand How Carbon Monoxide Can Be Harmful

- Don't use a grill, generator or camping stove inside your home, garage or near a window.
- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Don't leave a car, SUV or motorcycle engine running inside a garage, even if the doors are open.
- Never use your oven or stovetop to heat your home.
- On the outside of your home, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove and fireplace are clear of snow and other debris.
- Carbon monoxide can accumulate in or around your motorboat, so install an alarm on your boat.



*Carbon monoxide (CO) is a gas that you cannot see, taste or smell. Each year, 184 children in the United States die due to carbon monoxide poisoning and more than 20,000 children visit the emergency room.*



This information has been distributed by Safe Kids Grand Forks and Altru Health System. For more information on childhood safety and injury risk areas, contact Safe Kids Grand Forks at 701.780.1489 or [safekids@altru.org](mailto:safekids@altru.org).





## CO in Recreational Spaces

Often times, portable generators are used in sheds, fishing houses, hunting lodges, campers or trailer homes to heat them during cold weather. It is important to remember that carbon monoxide is a by-product of the gas powered generator running. Here are reminders to keep your fishing or camping expedition safe:

- Assure that you have a portable carbon monoxide detector with you as part of your equipment or installed in a permanent location if a generator is being used to heat a shed, mobile home or other type of permanent structure.
- Keep the generator well away from the building so the build-up of the colorless and odorless gas cannot get in through the doors, windows or other open areas. It is recommended that the generator be placed at LEAST 20 feet away from the building with the exhaust facing away. Make sure that your extension cord is long enough and in good condition to reach that far. Also, consider the direction of the wind and how that may blow exhaust fumes back toward the building structure. Keep the generator away from the area of windows and doors.
- Never use items such as fuel-burning lanterns, cook stoves or grills inside a tent, camper, fish house or other recreational building.
- Routinely inspect heating equipment that is used in recreational equipment to assure they are in working order. Also check the batteries of your CO alarm each spring and fall to assure they are still functioning.
- If you are staying at a campsite or using a fish house with others around, be aware of where their generator may be placed and how that could contaminate your air space.
- Carbon monoxide can also build up from the engine of a boat. Stay clear of these areas and assure that people being towed behind a boat are at least 20 feet away. Be aware of CO build-up from neighboring boats that are running on a dock.
- Consider placing a CO detector in the cabin of your boat.



## Know the Signs & Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Nausea and vomiting
- Confusion
- Irritability
- Eventual loss of consciousness and death

\*\* These symptoms are similar to the flu. Don't ignore them, especially if you find yourself feeling better when you leave the house for work, school or errands and then feel sick again when returning home. An alarm installed in your home, garage, or recreational vehicle is what will save your life from a CO poisoning.

## Leave the House If the Alarm Sounds

- If the alarm goes off, immediately move outdoors or to an open window or door for some fresh air. Account for everyone inside your home.
- Call 911 or the fire department. Remain outside or by an open window until emergency personnel arrive to assist you.