

CARBON MONOXIDE

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odourless, colourless, tasteless gas that is deadly to human beings. It can be produced from a number of sources such as automobile exhaust, woodstove and natural gas / propane fired equipment that are not operating properly or adequately vented.

Always remember: you cannot see carbon monoxide, you cannot taste carbon monoxide, and you cannot smell carbon monoxide. It can cause you and your loved ones serious harm.

Install a CO alarm / monitor in your residence. In the Province of Ontario, it is now law to have a CO monitor in your residence.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning:

If CO is inhaled, it depletes the amount of oxygen in your red blood cells and this will result in specific symptoms. Depending on the amount inhaled and the length of exposure, symptoms may include the following:

- At low concentrations: slight headache and / or shortness of breath during moderate physical exercise.
- At higher concentrations: severe headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, confusion, weakness, blurred vision, collapse, fainting, loss of muscle control and drowsiness.
- At extreme concentrations: Unconsciousness, brain damage, death.

Signs you may have CO in your home:

These are some of the signs that carbon monoxide is in your home:

- Stuffy, stale or smelly / acrid air.
- If you have already taken steps to reduce moisture production and water condensation is appearing on your window. This could also mean the humidifier is set to high.
- Yellow burner flame instead of the normal clear blue flame. This does not apply to natural gas fireplaces in which the yellow flame is intentional for a pleasing appearance.
- A pilot light that keeps going out.
- The smell of unusual gases. Even though CO is odourless, it is sometimes accompanied by odour bearing exhaust gases.

If you detect any of the above and there are no medical issues, call Six Nations Natural Gas immediately 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

If you suspect CO in your home and there are medical problems:

- **Call 911.**
- Ensure all people and pets leave the home.
- Seek medical attention immediately.
- Call Six Nations Natural Gas for an inspection.

How to prevent CO in your home:

Because of the strict codes that cover the installation and operation of natural gas equipment and appliances, the use of natural gas is very safe. Appliances will wear and malfunctions can occur which will increase the risk of CO in your home. To reduce this risk:

- Have your appliances inspected annually by a heating contractor who is licensed through the Technical Standards and Safety Authority.
- Ensure all outdoor exhaust outlets for the appliances are clear of ice, snow, birds' nests and bee hives, so that CO can be freely exhausted to the external environment and not flow back into your home.
- Install CO alarms on all levels of your home and change the batteries once a year.
- Have your chimney checked.