

Carbon Monoxide The Silent Killer



When weather turns cold and we start relying on heaters to warm up our homes, there is a silent killer that can put everyone in your family at risk. Faulty appliances, especially heaters, could be producing dangerous Carbon Monoxide without our knowledge.

In the home where carbon monoxide problems slowly develop, victims may mistake their symptoms for the flu. When carbon monoxide levels are higher and develop more rapidly -- for example, from generators in residential spaces -- mental confusion can set in rapidly. Victims may lose muscle control without being aware of the flu-like symptoms and will probably succumb to poisoning if they are not rescued.

WHO IS AT RISK FROM CO POISONING?

Everyone!

High risk groups include infants, the elderly, pregnant women, and anyone with a previous history of cardiac insufficiency or chronic obstructive lung disease.

WHAT IS CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING?

Carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless by-product of combustion, present whenever fuel is burned. It is produced by common home appliances, such as gas or oil furnaces, gas ovens and hotplates, gas water heaters or space heaters, fireplaces, charcoal grills and wood burning stoves.

WHY IS CO POISONING HARMFUL?

It's poisonous because it binds to haemoglobin, replacing the oxygen in your red blood cells with carbon monoxide. This can lead to serious tissue damage, or even death.

Cerebral edema (swelling of the brain) is also a common result of severe **carbon monoxide** poisoning. This life threatening condition entails the destruction of brain cells by compressing them into themselves within the cranial compartment. Studies have shown that cerebral edema caused by CO poisoning can cause delayed neurological problems that involve the "higher" or cognitive functions, and may cause a Parkinsonian-like brain syndrome.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING?

- **Headache.**
- **Weakness.**
- **Dizziness.**
- **Irritability.**
- **Confusion/Memory loss**
- **Disorientation**
- **Nausea or vomiting.**
- **Shortness of breath.**
- **Blurred vision.**
- **Abnormal reflexes**
- **Chest Pain**
- **Loss of consciousness.**

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HOW DO YOU TREAT CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING?

- 1 Get the Person to Fresh Air. Move the person away from carbon monoxide area. If the person is unconscious, check for injuries before moving.
Call **000** in Australia or **111** in New Zealand
- 2 Begin CPR, if the person is not breathing normally
- 3 Follow Up. Once at the hospital, treatment will depend on the severity of the carbon monoxide exposure.
- 4

HOW CAN I PREVENT CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING?

Install a carbon monoxide alarm in the hallway near every area of your home that is used for sleeping. Make sure furniture or curtains do not cover the alarm.

AND FINALLY... MAKE SURE THEY WORK!

Once you've installed your carbon monoxide alarms, it's important to keep them working. Carbon monoxide alarms should be tested monthly, and you can do this by pressing the test button with a broom handle. If your carbon monoxide alarm is beeping, it's likely it needs a new battery – if it beeps after a new battery is installed, it should be replaced.

You should make a habit of changing all the batteries in your carbon monoxide alarms at least yearly. All carbon monoxide alarms have a lifespan and should be replaced after 7 years – the date of manufacture can be found on the alarm.

LIFC09: CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR ALARM:



- Battery Operated (3AA's included) Provides protection during power cut
- Two LED's
 - Red – Illuminates when in alarm mode.
 - Green – DC power is present, normal operation.
- Test/Reset Button
 - Tests CO alarm circuit operation and allows you to immediately silence the alarm.
- Continuously monitors CO levels detected
- End of Life Alarm
 - Alerts user to replace the alarm after 7-years protection
- Test/reset button
- BSI standards approved to EN50291