

The Dangers of Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless and toxic gas. Because it is impossible to see, taste or smell the toxic fumes, CO can kill you before you are aware it is in your home. At lower levels of exposure, CO causes mild effects that are often mistaken for the flu. These symptoms include headaches, burning eyes, dizziness, disorientation, nausea and fatigue. The effects of CO exposure can vary greatly from person to person depending on age, overall health and the concentration and length of exposure.

How You Can Make Your Home Safe

- Before each heating season, have your heating system checked by a qualified plumbing or heating professional.
- Make sure appliance vents and exhaust ducts, such as those on water heaters, dryers and ranges, are not blocked, are in good condition and are properly connected to exhaust the combustion gases out of doors. Keep the area around the furnace and water heater clear.
- Check your chimney to make sure it is not blocked by debris or bird nests. You can do this by inserting a mirror in the clean-out opening to view the top. Replace rusted vent pipes.
- Never operate your car or other gas-powered engines in an enclosed space, such as a garage.

It is recommended that households and businesses purchase a carbon monoxide detector. Similar to a fire alarm, these detectors will sound if CO builds up in your home or office. If the detector sounds the alarm, open the doors and windows, call a professional to check your appliances, and call 911 or the Poison Control Center at **800-222-1222** if anyone is experiencing symptoms of CO poisoning.

Safety Notice on Using Generators

Never use a generator inside homes, garages, crawlspaces, sheds, or similar areas. Deadly levels of carbon monoxide can quickly build up in these areas and can linger for hours, even after the generator has shut off.



For More Information

The Missouri Public Service Commission (PSC) regulates investor-owned water, sewer, natural gas, electric and steam utilities. The PSC also has limited jurisdiction over telecommunications providers in Missouri. The PSC works to ensure Missouri citizens receive safe, reliable and reasonably priced utility services. If you have an inquiry, billing question or service-related issue that your utility provider cannot answer, please call the PSC at **1-800-392-4211** or visit our website at **psc.mo.gov**.



Missouri Public Service Commission

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