

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **If I have my fossil fuel-burning appliances checked yearly, do I still need to install a Carbon Monoxide (CO) detector?**

Absolutely. A CO detector will sound if there is a breakdown in a fossil fuel-burning appliance used in the home. Appliances deteriorate and can malfunction which could result in serious health problems or death from Carbon Monoxide Poisoning.

### **Am I at risk for obtaining Carbon Monoxide poisoning if I do not use gas appliances in my home?**

All appliances that use fossil fuels, oil, natural gas, coal, and LPG (propane) are equally as dangerous as gas-burning appliances.

### **What are the symptoms of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning?**

At low levels many people will experience mild nausea and a mild headache. Moderate levels will increase symptoms adding light headedness and other flu-like symptoms. At high levels death or the risk of neurological disorders occurs.

### **What type of carbon monoxide detector should I use?**

The best type of Carbon Monoxide detector is one with a numeric LED display—a measurement of existing Carbon Monoxide which can help in the prevention of health risks.

### **How many carbon monoxide detectors should I have and where should they be placed in the home?**

Illinois state law requires that a detector be located within 15 feet of any area used for sleeping. A detector is NOT required for every level or in an occupancy that has all electrical appliances and no attached garage.

## Fossil Fuel Burning Appliances

- Fuel fired furnaces (non-electric)
- Gas water heaters
- Fireplaces, oil or wood stoves and ovens
- Gas stoves
- Gas dryers
- Charcoal and propane grills
- Lawnmowers, snow blowers and other yard equipment (non-electric)
- Construction tools and gasoline generators
- Automobiles

### **How do I know if I am at risk from carbon monoxide?**

Although Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless gas there are signs that indicate incomplete combustion is occurring, resulting in the production of CO. These include:

- Yellow or orange rather than blue flames (apart from fuel-effect fires or flue-less appliances which display this color flame)
- Soot or yellow/brown staining around or on appliances
- Pilot lights that frequently blow out

Exposure to low Carbon Monoxide levels for a long period of time is also dangerous. Carbon Monoxide poisoning may lead to permanent heart or brain damage. Maternal exposure during pregnancy may result in severe harm to the baby.



# Carbon Monoxide Detectors

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# Carbon Monoxide - The Silent Killer

## Illinois State CO Detector Law effective January 1, 2007

As of January 1, 2007, Illinois State Law requires approved and operating Carbon Monoxide detectors to be installed:

- In all residential, commercial, and institutional occupancies where people sleep. This includes single-family, multi-family homes, day-care centers, nursing homes, and other locations.
- Only in places where fossil-fueled appliances or devices are used, or where a garage is attached.
- Within 15 feet of any room used for sleeping.

### What is the Danger of Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a "silent killer" because it is odorless, tasteless, invisible, and lighter than air. CO is quickly absorbed by the body, preventing blood from bringing oxygen to cells, tissues and organs, suffocating it's victims. Victims of Carbon Monoxide poisoning are often sickened or killed while sleeping. A Carbon Monoxide detector will sound when levels of the gas are elevated, alerting residents that they need to leave the home.

Early symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning are often confused with those of influenza, food poisoning or other illnesses. For that reason, victims may delay seeking treatment or leaving the home, increasing their exposure to the poisonous gas.

### CO Exposure Symptoms include:

- dizziness
- drowsiness
- nausea
- headache
- coughing
- irregular heartbeat
- pale skin with cherry red lips and ear tips



### The Lake Zurich Fire Rescue Department further recommends:

- At the beginning of the heating season have all fuel burning appliances checked annually by a qualified technician. Appliances deteriorate with time and can become a health risk.
- Never idle an automobile inside a garage.
- Do not use any gasoline-powered engines such as mowers, weed trimmers, snow blowers, chain saws, small engines or generators in enclosed spaces.
- Never use a charcoal or propane grill indoors.
- Never use a gas oven to heat your home, even for a short time.
- Never sleep in a room heated by a gas or kerosene space heater which does not have proper venting.

Dangerous amounts of Carbon Monoxide can accumulate as a result of poor installation, poor maintenance, failure or damage to an appliance, or when rooms are poorly ventilated.

### Follow all of the manufacturers recommendations:

- Purchase AC powered units with a battery back-up or units with a LED readout
- Place detectors high on a wall but no closer than 6" from the ceiling
- Call 911 upon detector alarm
- Make a point of actually installing your carbon monoxide detector
- Remember to change all detector batteries twice annually.



<u>Concentration of CO in air</u>	<u>Inhalation time and toxic developments</u>
50 parts per million (PPM)	Lake Zurich Fire Rescue Department recommends evacuation of premise and call 911
200 PPM	Slight headache within 2-3 hours
400 PPM	Frontal headache within 1-2 hours, becoming widespread in 3 hours
800 PPM	Dizziness, nausea, convulsions within 45 minutes, insensible in 2 hours

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