

CARBON MONOXIDE

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES ON THE DANGERS OF CARBON MONOXIDE IN HOMES

WHAT IS IT AND WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless and odorless gas that is a product of incomplete combustion. It is created in any place where combustion occurs and in greater concentration where sufficient oxygen is not present to efficiently combust the fuel. For this reason CO can concentrate in any house that has a combustion fuel heating system (natural gas, propane, heating oil or wood), uses portable combustion heaters or generators (natural gas, propane, gasoline or kerosene), or has an attached garage (from a motor vehicle).



Never use a generator indoors, even in an attached garage with the door open. Place generators at least 5 feet away from doors, windows and other openings and so that exhaust fumes cannot enter through them.

REGULATIONS

Because it is odorless and colorless, CO detectors are required by Section 315 of the New York State Residential Code in new homes and when new sleeping rooms are added to an existing home. In accordance with the NYS CO detection in commercial buildings rule, since June of 2016, they are also required in all commercial buildings (including apartment buildings with more than two units) and government operated buildings.

POTENTIAL HEALTH EFFECTS

Early signs of CO poisoning are: dull headache, weakness, dizziness, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath and blurred vision. Other health effects include chest pain, weakness, seizures, loss of consciousness, coma and death. Individuals with heart and lung conditions are more susceptible to the effects of CO. If you are in a building or other enclosed area where a combustion source is present and notice these effects in yourself or others immediately leave the house, bring everyone else with you and call 9-1-1 for emergency assistance.

PREVENTION

The best ways to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning are:

- Install and maintain all fixed combustion appliances (stove, furnace, boiler, hot water heater, fireplace, wood stove, etc.) in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and building code requirements. Have them cleaned and inspected before heating season by a qualified professional. Make sure they are properly vented and keep their vents clear of obstructions.
- Do not operate outside combustion equipment inside the house or any other enclosed structure (generators, barbecues, camp stoves, etc.).
- If cars are in a garage, do not let them idle inside. At minimum, ensure all doors are open when warming them up.
- Have at least one functioning CO detector or alarm. Place and maintain it according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- When using portable indoor heaters provide ventilation by slightly opening a window and do not use them if everyone is asleep.
- If there is a carbon monoxide incident make sure the source was identified, repaired and tested before returning home.

New York State Child Day Care Regulations 416.5 (v)

Requires operational carbon monoxide detectors be installed per applicable laws.

For more information and resources visit:

www.cseany.org/safety



Subscribe to our newsletter:



Knowledge is power—but collective action saves lives.

At CSEA, transforming knowledge into action is central to our mission of protecting workers. When hazards and close calls are documented and reported, they can be addressed before they cause harm. That's how we prevent injuries and illnesses—by making sure problems don't get ignored. Your voice and vigilance are essential. Now more than ever, we need your help to ensure every workplace is safe, healthy, and accountable.

THE LIFE YOU SAVE COULD BE YOUR OWN!