

A blurred background image of an ambulance with its emergency lights flashing. The ambulance is white with orange and blue accents. A blue Star of Life is visible on the side, along with the number 502. The word 'NCE' is partially visible on the side panel.

Silent Killer

**What You Should
Know About
Carbon Monoxide**

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DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

Things You Should Know About Carbon Monoxide

- 1. It can kill you.** Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that can be deadly. It is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in the U.S. Young children, pregnant women, senior citizens and people with heart or respiratory problems are especially vulnerable to CO poisoning.
- 2. It's invisible.** You cannot see it, touch it or smell it. Carbon monoxide has no odor or color and cannot be detected without the use of a carbon monoxide detector.
- 3. You could be at risk.** Carbon monoxide gas is created from the burning of natural gas, oil, charcoal, gasoline, wood and other materials. Any fuel-burning appliance that is not vented will produce carbon monoxide. This includes stoves, furnaces, ovens, fireplaces, generators, gas-powered equipment, car exhaust and gas water heaters.



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How does CO affect my body?

When we breathe, our red blood cells pick up oxygen. However, they pick up CO faster than oxygen, so if there is CO in the air, more of it will enter your body than oxygen. This lack of oxygen can damage tissues and result in death.

Symptoms, which may clear up when you leave the area, range from mild to severe and include the following:

Low level poisoning

- Tiredness in healthy people
- Chest pain in people with heart disease

Medium level poisoning

- Flulike symptoms including nausea, dizziness, headache and confusion
- Impaired vision and coordination
- Breathing difficulty and increased blood pressure
- Skin with a reddish cast

High level poisoning

- Convulsions or seizures
- Loss of consciousness
- Death

Protect yourself

To protect you and your family, follow these safety precautions:

- Install a UL listed carbon monoxide monitor on every floor and outside of sleeping areas about 5 feet off the floor. Look for a monitor marked with the phrase “single station carbon monoxide alarm.”
- Test CO monitors weekly, and replace batteries yearly. Follow manufacturer's care instructions.



- Never use your stove to heat your home, and keep your range clean.
- Have fuel-burning appliances inspected yearly. Consider buying vented appliances.
- Do not idle your car in a closed garage.

If Your CO monitor sounds:

- **Get out of the house immediately and call 911 or the fire department.**
- **Do not re-enter the house until it has been aired out and CO levels are normal.**
- **Call a qualified technician to inspect fuel-burning appliances.**

