

*Serving the Cities of Kent, SeaTac, Covington, and King County Fire District 37*

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## Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

An issue in any language

**Kent, Wash. - January 4, 2016-** Every winter we hear about a source of poisoning and death that is fully preventable.

Whether you call it 一氧化碳, Угарный газ, □ □ □ □ □, Monóxido de carbono, or carbon monoxide, almost every home has a device/appliance that produces it.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a byproduct of incomplete combustion. Anything that burns produces it. Gasoline, propane, natural gas, and wood/paper products all give off CO gasses that can be deadly. Homes that have professionally installed devices such as a gas furnace or wood stove have vents to protect occupants. But even the best furnace or stove can malfunction; an incorrectly installed or poorly maintained device only increases the danger.

What are the dangers?

- Carbon monoxide is a gas that blocks the body's ability to absorb oxygen - and it doesn't take much to make you sick.
- You cannot detect CO with your normal senses. It is odorless, tasteless, and invisible.
- The symptoms of poisoning are often misdiagnosed as "flu-like" symptoms.

What are the symptoms of CO poisoning?

- Headache
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Seizures
- Chest pain
- Unconsciousness and possible death

What are the solutions?

- Purchase and install carbon monoxide alarms on each floor of your home. Follow the manufacturer's instructions when installing it. Buy alarms that have an Underwriter Laboratory seal of approval.
- Never bring BBQs or gasoline generators into/near your home.
- Never leave a vehicle running while it is in a garage and never run it with the garage door closed.
- Have CO producing devices (furnaces, fireplaces, wood stoves, etc.) serviced regularly.

What should you do if your CO alarm activates or you think you may be suffering from CO poisoning?

- Evacuate your home immediately.
- Call 9-1-1 once you and your family are safely outside.
- Do not go back inside until the fire department has given you the OK.

As we enter the stormiest winter months of the year and potential power outages, be aware of the dangers associated with carbon monoxide and what you can do about it.

**Fast Fact:** According to the CDC, over 400 people die from CO poisoning in this country each year and more than 20,000 go to emergency rooms for CO poisoning treatment.



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