

For YOUR information:

How much do you know about Carbon Monoxide?

Cold weather is here and furnaces, gas logs and space heaters are being turned on...how much do you know about Carbon Monoxide? Here are a few helpful facts that might surprise you.

- **CO poisoning is responsible for hundreds of deaths and thousands of emergency room visits every year, many of which are related to gas appliances.**
- **Carbon Monoxide, or CO, is produced by combustion of fossil fuels - ALL fossil fuels. The most common sources in a home are gas appliances such as furnaces, gas logs, ovens and cooktops.**
- **Under most conditions CO is produced only in trace quantities by gas appliances...when an appliance is starved of oxygen, or when combustion is otherwise impeded, CO is produced in larger amounts.**
- **CO has no odor whatsoever - humans cannot sense Carbon Monoxide by smell, period! Gas logs, furnaces and space heaters will sometimes generate a smell, but this is not an indicator of the presence of CO.**
- **Carbon Monoxide causes sickness by lowering the blood's ability to supply oxygen to the body. CO poisoning creates symptoms which are similiar to the onset of a cold or flu - headache, nausea, fatigue, and dizziness are all common early symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning.**
- **CO poisoning is cumulative. This means that long-term exposure to relatively low levels of Carbon Monoxide can cause increasingly severe symptoms.**
- **Carbon Monoxide permanently replaces oxygen in red blood cells. When a red blood cell bonds with CO it is permanently disabled - only eventual, natural replacement of affected blood cells will restore the blood to full oxygen capacity.**
- **Your blood cells actually prefer CO over oxygen! Given the choice, they'll choos Carbon Monoxide over oxygen every time - this is one of the reasons that low level exposure is so dangerous.**
- **Carbon Monoxide is very slightly lighter than air, but tends to diffuse relatively evenly throughout homes. CO detectors should be placed near bedrooms, but otherwise can be installed near the floor or near the ceiling, whichever is convenient.**
- **Carbon Monoxide detectors have a limited lifespan which is indicated on the packaging or documentation that came with the detector. If the age and expected lifespan of a detector can't be determined, the best course of action is replacement.**

Knowing the symptoms and common causes of Carbon Monoxide poisoning can help keep you and your family safe from this silent, odorless and colorless gas.