

Carbon Monoxide Safety

In the past decade, people have become more aware of the risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning in the home. Often called the silent killer, carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely. In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel are potential sources of carbon monoxide. Vehicles or generators running in an attached garage can also produce dangerous levels of carbon monoxide.

Facts and Figures

- An estimated 170 people die in homes each year from CO poisoning
- The risk of unintentional CO death is highest for the very old (ages 75 or above)

Symptoms of CO Poisoning

Severe headache, dizziness, mental confusion, nausea, or faintness. Many of these symptoms are similar to the flu, food poisoning or other illnesses.

Safety Tips

- Install CO alarms outside each sleeping area in your home to provide early warning of accumulating carbon monoxide.
- Test CO alarms at least once a month, and replace CO alarms according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Do not run a vehicle, generator, or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open.
- Have fuel-burning household heating equipment (fireplaces, furnaces, water heaters, wood and coal stoves, space or portable heaters) and chimneys inspected by a professional every year before cold weather sets in.
- When using a fireplace, open the flue for adequate ventilation.
- Never use your oven to heat your home
- Only use barbecue grills - which can produce CO - outside. Never use them in the home or garage.
- When purchasing new heating and cooking equipment, select products tested and labeled by an independent testing laboratory.
- When purchasing an existing home, have a qualified technician evaluate the integrity of the heating and cooking systems, as well as the sealed spaces between the garage and house.
- When camping, remember to use battery-powered heaters and flashlights in tents, trailers, and motor homes.

- CO alarms are not substitutes for smoke alarms. Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of the home and in or outside all sleeping areas.
- Know the difference between the sound of the smoke alarms and the sound of the CO alarms.

If Your CO Monitor Sounds

- If it is a battery-powered intermittent alarm, check the battery.
- If it is a steady alarm or you are unable to determine, evacuate the dwelling. Do not re-enter until the responding agency says it is ok.
- Report the CO alarm warning by calling 9-1-1.
- Call a qualified technician to inspect all equipment.

Please contact the City of Casper Fire-EMS CRR Division at 307-235-8222 if you have any questions.