

Protecting Your Family from Carbon Monoxide Poisoning



Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless gas that can be deadly. It is produced when fuels like gas, oil, coal, or wood do not burn completely. Common household sources include malfunctioning furnaces, gas stoves, fireplaces, and generators.

How to Prevent CO Exposure:

- **Install CO Alarms:** Place alarms on every level of your home, especially near sleeping areas. Test alarms monthly, replace batteries annually, and install new alarms every 5-7 years.
- **Ensure Proper Ventilation:** Keep chimneys, flues, and vents clean and free from debris or snow. Blocked ventilation can trap CO indoors.
- **Service Appliances Regularly:** Have professionals inspect and maintain furnaces, water heaters, gas stoves, and other fuel-burning appliances annually.
- **Use Generators Safely:** Generators should only be operated outdoors, at least 20 feet away from windows, doors, and vents. Never run them inside homes, garages, or enclosed spaces.
- **Avoid Indoor Use of Fuel-Burning Devices:** Never use grills, camp stoves, portable heaters, or ovens to heat your home.

Recognizing CO Poisoning:

Symptoms of CO poisoning include headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. Severe exposure can lead to loss of consciousness or death. If you or someone in your home shows symptoms, move to fresh air immediately and call 911.

Key Safety Tips:

- Never leave a car running in an attached garage, even with the garage door open.
- Check that gas appliances are properly vented and functioning efficiently.
- Educate your family on CO risks and alarm signals.

Taking these precautions can save lives and ensure your home is safe from this invisible threat.

For more information, visit: [epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/protect-your-family-and-yourself-carbon-monoxide-poisoning](https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/protect-your-family-and-yourself-carbon-monoxide-poisoning)



MARIAN S. & ALLAN P. KIRBY MUNICIPAL BUILDING

TOWNSHIP OF HARDING
BOARD OF HEALTH
PO Box 666, 21 Blue Mill Road
New Vernon, 07976
Telephone: (973) 267-8000
Fax: (973) 829-7025
www.hardingnj.org



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