



## Carbon Monoxide Facts

1. Carbon monoxide (CO) is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels such as natural gas, wood, propane, gasoline, etc. burn incompletely. This gas, often called the "silent killer" is usually produced when fuel burning appliances malfunction, or aren't vented properly. Idling vehicles also produce carbon monoxide.
2. A person can be poisoned by a small amount of CO over a long period of time or by a large amount of CO over a shorter time period.
3. In San Francisco and the Greater Bay Area, there have been a number of incidents in the past year in which citizens were either killed or seriously injured by CO.
4. Fuel-burning heating equipment and chimneys should be inspected annually by a professional before cold weather sets in. Make sure vents are open and clear prior to using heating appliances. Never use an oven or a barbeque to heat your home.
5. Vehicles should not be left to idle indoors.
6. Generators should be used outdoors, away from windows or doors.
7. New laws now require CO alarms in residential buildings.
8. CO alarms are inexpensive and easy to install.
9. At lower concentrations, CO poisoning and flu symptoms may seem similar; chest pain, confusion, headache, dizziness, weakness, and nausea and vomiting may develop. In most cases, these symptoms go away after the individual leaves the location of the CO emission. Higher levels of exposure may result in similar symptoms, as well as impaired vision and coordination, cardiovascular, neurological and respiratory problems, loss of consciousness, and death. Studies show that CO may be associated with increased numbers of allergies and asthma cases.
10. CO poisoning is the nation's leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that about 500 people die due to CO poisoning annually.
11. If your CO alarm indicates a presence of CO, the San Francisco Fire Department recommends that you evacuate the building and call 911.