
Prevent CO Poisoning



When power outages occur after severe weather (such as hurricanes or tornadoes), using alternative sources of power can cause carbon monoxide (CO) to build up in a home and poison the people and animals inside.



Every year, more than 400 people die in the U. S. from accidental CO poisoning. Change the batteries in your CO detector every six months. If you don't have a battery-powered or battery back-up CO detector, buy one soon.

CO is found in fumes produced by portable generators, stoves, lanterns, and gas ranges, or by burning charcoal and wood. CO from these sources can build up in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. People and animals in these spaces can be poisoned and can die from breathing CO.

How to Recognize CO Poisoning

The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. People who are sleeping or who have been drinking alcohol can die from CO poisoning before ever having symptoms.

Important CO Poisoning Prevention Tips in 16 Additional Languages.

- Never use a gas range or oven to heat a home.
- Never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a garage.
- Never run a motor vehicle, generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine outside an open window, door, or vent where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area.



- Never run a generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed structure, even if the doors or windows are open, unless the equipment is professionally installed and vented. Keep vents and flues free of debris, especially if winds are high. Flying debris can block ventilation lines.
- Never use a charcoal grill, hibachi, lantern, or portable camping stove inside a home, tent, or camper.
- If conditions are too hot or too cold, seek shelter with friends or at a community shelter.
- If CO poisoning is suspected, consult a health care professional right away.

CO poisoning is entirely preventable. You can protect yourself and your family by acting wisely in case of a power outage and learning the symptoms of CO poisoning.

For more information, please visit www.cdc.gov/co.