



Fire Prevention Canada

Working with the private and public sectors to achieve
fire safety through education

QUICK FACTS ON CO

WHAT IS IT: A colourless, odourless and tasteless gas.

SIGNS: Stuffy air, water vapour, backdraft and soot from a fireplace.

SYMPTOMS: Headaches, weakness, nausea, vomiting and loss of muscle control. They can be mistaken for flu symptoms.

EFFECTS: If inhaled, carbon monoxide deprives the blood of oxygen. Prolonged exposure can lead to unconsciousness, brain damage or death.

CAUSES: Blocked or dirty vents, flues, chimneys and furnaces, as well as improper ventilation of burning fireplaces or woodstoves.

DEATHS: Approximately 200 per year.

PREVENTION: Annual inspection and cleaning of:

- Furnaces
- Chimneys
- Fireplaces
- Other fuel-burning equipment such as gas dryers

Safety tips on how to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning

INSTALL at least one carbon monoxide detector in your home.

ENSURE a wood or coal-burning stove is properly installed and vented.

DON'T operate a gasoline-powered engine, kerosene stove or charcoal grill in a closed space.

BARBECUE grills should never be operated indoors.

CHECK clothes dryer vents that open outside the house for lint.

CHECK forced air fans for proper ventilation.

**If you suspect carbon monoxide in your home, get out immediately
and call the fire department.**