

# Carbon Monoxide Safety

## Illinois Law Requires Detectors in All Residences

Often called the silent killer because of its odorless, tasteless, and colorless nature, carbon monoxide remains the leading cause of accidental poisonings in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Each year, carbon monoxide poisoning claims nearly 500 lives and causes more than 20,000 visits to hospital emergency departments.

In Illinois, every home is required to have at least one carbon monoxide alarm in operating condition within 15 feet of every room used for sleeping purposes.

Carbon monoxide can be found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by cars and trucks, small gasoline engines, stoves, lanterns, coal- and wood-burning stoves, gas ranges, and heating systems. Carbon monoxide from these sources can

build up in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces, poisoning people and animals who breathe it.

Portable electric generators are a source of carbon monoxide poisoning if used improperly. Many people rely on these units during extended power outages, but special care must be used.

If a carbon monoxide detector in your house goes off, check to see if anyone in the house is experiencing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. If so, get them out of the house immediately and tell your doctor you suspect poisoning from the gas.

Regardless of whether anyone in the home has symptoms, ventilate the house, turn off all potential sources of carbon monoxide, call 911, and have a qualified technician check your gas appliances.

## Safety Tips

### Do:

- Have your heating system, water heater, and any other gas, oil, or coal-burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year.
- Install a battery-operated CO detector in your home and check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall. If the detector sounds, leave your home immediately and call your local fire department, not Rock Energy Cooperative.
- Seek prompt medical attention if you suspect CO poisoning and are feeling dizzy, light-headed, or nauseous.

### Don't:

- Use a generator, charcoal grill, camp stove, or other gasoline or charcoal-burning device inside your home, basement, or garage or near a window.
- Run a car or truck inside a garage attached to your house, even if you leave the door open.
- Burn anything in a stove or fireplace that isn't vented.
- Heat your house with a gas oven.

## Know the Symptoms

Physical symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning vary depending on the amount in the bloodstream.

### Mild Exposure

- Slight headache
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Fatigue
- Flu-like symptoms

### Medium Exposure

- Severe headache
- Drowsiness
- Confusion
- Rapid heart rate

### Severe Exposure

- Unconsciousness
- Convulsions
- Cardiac/respiratory failure

