



NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE OF FIRE PREVENTION & CONTROL

NY STATE FIRE

Carbon Monoxide Facts

- Carbon monoxide is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in the United States. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Each year, approximately 200 people in New York State are hospitalized because of accidental CO poisoning. Many more people are treated for CO exposure in emergency rooms without further hospital care. (NYS Health Department)
- Nationally, accidental CO poisoning kills 400 people and injures another 20,000 each year. (CDC)
- Carbon monoxide is a silent killer – you cannot see it, smell it or taste it. The **ONLY** safe way to detect it is with a carbon monoxide alarm. Carbon monoxide alarms range in price from \$20 to \$50 depending on additional features.
- CO is produced anytime a fuel is burned. Potential sources include gas or oil furnaces, water heaters, space heaters, clothes dryers, barbecue grills, fireplaces, wood-burning stoves, gas ovens, generators, and car exhaust fumes.
- Most CO incidents happen during the winter months, mainly due to an increased use in fuel-burning appliances. Nearly all (90.5%) of New York housing uses some form of fossil-fuel burning heat source (gas, fuel oil, or kerosene), which can generate carbon monoxide. (U.S. Census)
- At high concentration levels, carbon monoxide can be fatal in minutes. CO rapidly accumulates in the blood and is attracted to the hemoglobin in your bloodstream. When breathed in, CO passes through the lungs and bonds with hemoglobin, displacing the oxygen that cells need to function.
- A January 2006 article in the Journal of the American Medical Association indicated that for individuals who had been involved in a CO poisoning and survived, there was a three-fold increase in coronary artery disease seven years later compared to non-poisoned patients.

For more information about carbon monoxide and other fire safety information, visit the Office of Fire Prevention and Control's website at: www.dhSES.ny.gov/ofpc

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