



City of Fort Atkinson  
**Fire Department**

*Dedicated to the Protection of Life and Property*

## ***Carbon Monoxide***

### ***General information***

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is an invisible, odorless, gas that is created when fuels such as natural gas, propane, oil, kerosene, wood, coal, gasoline, and methane are burned. Because it is impossible to see, taste, or smell, CO can cause illness or death before you are even aware it is present. Each year, more than 400 Americans die from unintentional CO poisoning not linked to fires, more than 20,000 visit the emergency room, and more than 4,000 are hospitalized.

### ***Effects of carbon monoxide***

The effects of carbon monoxide vary with the concentration levels and exposure time. 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 short amount of time. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. Higher levels of CO inhalation can cause loss of consciousness and death. Unless suspected, CO poisoning can be difficult to diagnose because the symptoms mimic other illnesses.

### ***What to do if your CO alarm sounds or you believe you have CO symptoms***

If your CO alarm sounds or you believe you have symptoms of CO, evacuate yourself, your family, and your pets if possible and call 911 to reach the Emergency Services Dispatch Center. The Fire Dept. will be dispatched and an ambulance if necessary.

If you are unable to exit your home or apartment without assistance, advise the dispatch center and move to an area near an open window or exterior door where you can wait until emergency personnel arrive to assist you.

### ***Fire Department response/services***

The Fire Dept. personnel arriving on scene will have appropriate personal protective equipment available to enter hazardous atmospheres if necessary and are equipped with monitoring equipment that can determine if there is carbon monoxide or other problems present in your home or building.

If carbon monoxide is detected, the Fire Dept. will take the necessary actions to eliminate the CO and will attempt to determine the source. Should the source of the CO be found to be from an appliance or some type of equipment, the Fire Dept. will shut off the fuel supply, disconnect electrical feeds, and/or remove the equipment in an effort to ensure the danger to the buildings occupants is eliminated. The FAFD will not however



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undertake any repair work as that responsibility falls to the owner who needs to have a qualified service technician make the necessary repairs.

## ***Sources of carbon monoxide***

Listed below are some common situations where carbon monoxide can cause a problem;

- Fuel burning equipment such as furnaces, stoves, water heaters, boilers, fireplaces, dryers, etc., that are not functioning correctly.
- Improperly vented fuel burning appliances.
- Leaking or obstructed chimneys or exhaust vents.
- Portable unvented fuel burning equipment.
- Automobile exhaust. (Vehicles left running in a garage or in close proximity to doors and windows of a building).

## ***Prevention***

- Follow manufacturer's guidelines for proper equipment installation and use.
- Follow the equipment manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedule for all fuel burning appliances/equipment.
- Ensure all vents are clear of snow, ice, bird/mice nests, lint (cloth dryers), or any other obstructions.
- Install C.O. alarms in locations required by the applicable building codes. \*For required locations, see the City of Fort Atkinson website/Fire Department/Fire Prevention Division or call the Fire Dept. @920-563-7795.
- Make sure to maintain and replaced all alarms according to manufacturer's recommendations.

## ***Miscellaneous information***

- CO alarms may alarm when other gases are present. These other gases can come from hair spray, carbon dioxide (dry ice), cleaning fluids, paint thinners, acetone, fingernail polish, polish remover, aerosol propellants, and other petroleum-based vapors.
- If your CO alarm begins "chirping / beeping" sporadically, it may be a battery/power supply problem, or a malfunction with the detector itself. Please consult the manufacturer and/or the operating manual that accompanied your device when it was purchased to determine the particular problem.

Please feel free to contact the FAFD with any questions you have regarding carbon monoxide, smoke alarms, or if you would like any other information on fire dept. related matters. We are your fire department and are available 24/7 365 days a year to assist you. Our non-emergency number is 1-920-563-7795.