



# Carbon monoxide safety Protect your family

Install a carbon monoxide detector  
and know what to do if it alarms.



For your **SAFETY**

 **Manitoba  
Hydro**

## The silent killer

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless and odourless gas, sometimes called the “silent killer.”

Dangerous CO levels result when oil, kerosene, gasoline, diesel, propane, natural gas or wood burns without enough oxygen. A faulty appliance, a clogged chimney, inadequate venting, back drafting of flue gas, or the buildup of engine exhaust in a garage can result in dangerous levels of carbon monoxide.

## New or older – your home needs to breathe too

Fireplaces, wood stoves, kitchen and bathroom fans, clothes dryers, central vacuum systems and heating equipment all compete for air in your home. If there is inadequate fresh air in your home the risk of CO accumulation increases. This risk can be greater in newer homes or older homes that have been tightly sealed.

## CO detectors help save lives

A CO detector can alert you to the presence of carbon monoxide gas in your home. An approved and certified CO detector that is properly installed can help save the lives of your family members.

CO detectors are not a replacement for the proper use and maintenance of your fuel-burning equipment and appliances.

## Signs of danger

The following signs may indicate the presence of CO in your home:

- a CO detector that alarms. Never unplug it or remove the batteries — when the alarm sounds, it is for a reason;
- stuffy, stale air;
- more condensation than usual on your windows;
- soot buildup around a fireplace, chimney or other fuel-burning equipment;
- back drafting of your fuel-burning equipment;
- a pilot light that repeatedly goes out.

### What should I do if my CO alarm goes off?

- Do not ignore the alarm.
- If you experience any symptoms of CO poisoning, call your local emergency services.
- If you suspect equipment malfunction, immediately turn off the fuel-burning equipment or appliance and contact Manitoba Hydro at **1-888-MBHYDRO (1-888- 624-9376)**.

### Be alert!

The symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are similar to those of the common flu. As a result, many cases of carbon monoxide poisoning may be left unreported and untreated during the flu season.

## CO poisoning symptoms

When inhaled, CO depletes your red blood cells of oxygen. Depending on the amount inhaled and the length of exposure time, your symptoms may vary.

<b>Low exposure</b>	Slight headache and/or shortness of breath with moderate physical activity
<b>High exposure</b>	Severe headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, mental confusion, weakness, vision and hearing impairment, collapse or fainting during exertion, loss of muscle control, and/or drowsiness
<b>Extreme exposure</b>	Unconsciousness, brain damage or death

### What should I do if I suspect CO poisoning?

- Call your local emergency services for help.
- Open windows to let in fresh air.
- Leave the house to get fresh air.

# How to keep carbon monoxide out of your home

## Have a qualified heating dealer:

- check and clean your heating system regularly;
- ensure all fuel-burning appliances requiring external vents have venting in place and they are secure;
- assess the need for a fresh air intake duct for any wood-burning fireplace or stove.

## You should:

- ensure all external vents (fresh air intake, exhaust, chimney) are clear of snow, insulation, leaves, birds' nests, lint and debris;
- never let your vehicle idle and DO NOT operate other gas-powered equipment (i.e. mower, chainsaw, snow blower, trimmer, generator) in an attached garage, even if the garage door is open;
- never operate a barbecue, camp stove or propane lantern in your home or garage;
- ensure the blower (fan) compartment door on your furnace is closed properly;
- buy equipment bearing an approved safety certification (i.e. UL or CSA). This ensures the equipment was manufactured in accordance with all national safety standards;
- make sure your furnace area is open and clear of debris for proper air circulation, as your furnace needs air to operate properly.

# Be alarmed!

If your carbon monoxide detector goes off, don't ignore it.

Installing a CO detector can give you peace of mind. Carbon monoxide detectors should be installed on all levels of your home, especially near bedrooms.

Remember to test and check your CO detector battery each month.

