

Dangers of Carbon Monoxide (CO)

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that can be deadly in minutes at high, undetected levels. This article examines ways which will help prevent you or your family members from being overcome by carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide, or CO, is produced when fuels are burned in your home – oil, natural gas, wood, paper, etc. These fuels, such as oil or gas may be burned in your furnace, your hot water heater, or your kitchen. They're used for heating and cooking and are often taken for granted.

CO is also caused by burning wood or paper or other combustibles in your fire place or wood burning stove. Normally, the CO is vented out of your home and there isn't any trouble. However, this is the time of year when the Hamden Fire Department begins responding to a number of calls for CO in people's homes.

These emergencies are caused by improper ventilation or malfunctions to appliances that produce CO. So what can be done to protect your family? First, have your oil or gas company service your systems yearly. Make sure your chimney is cleaned and inspected by licensed professionals before burning anything in your fireplace.

Second, never run cars, generators, or other fuel driven engines in closed spaces as this causes a high build-up of CO very quickly. Charcoal or gas grills should never be burned inside either as this releases CO as well. Follow operating instructions on all gasoline, diesel and propane powered equipment.

Finally, make sure you have an operable CO and smoke detector on each level of your home. If the detector goes off, call the fire department immediately. Replace batteries in CO and smoke detectors twice a year. If you feel sick with flu like symptoms get into fresh air immediately and call 911 for medical assistance.

For more information, please contact the Hamden Fire Department at 407-5880.

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