

## Little Rock-Fox Fire Protection District

### **Carbon Monoxide**

Carbon monoxide (CO) is odorless, colorless, and tasteless. It's produced when anything burns. This includes wood, natural gas, and propane. When fossil fuels do not burn properly, CO can build up and cause sickness – even death. It does this by being absorbed by the hemoglobin in the blood 200 times more readily than oxygen.

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#### **Recognize the symptoms of CO poisoning:**

Dizziness, nausea, headache, and coughing. Irregular heartbeat and pale skin with cherry red lips and ear tips

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#### **Know what to do if you suspect CO poisoning:**

Get fresh air and stay outside. Call 911 or the local fire department. Do not open windows, this will assist the fire department in determining what the source of the CO might be.

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#### **Safety measures:**

Never heat your home with your gas range or oven. Never burn charcoal inside your home or garage. Always open the chimney flue when you use your fireplace. Never run a combustion engine, such as your car, lawn mower or snow blower, in enclosed areas.

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#### **Where should I install my CO alarm?**

CO gas can be anywhere and everywhere. CO gas is equal to or slightly lighter than air, and disperses evenly with the air in a room. Therefore, install your CO alarm where air circulation is best. Do not mount your CO alarm within 1 foot of the ceiling/wall intersection or other dead air spaces. For earliest warning of CO presence we recommend that you install at least one CO alarm in the hallway outside each separate sleeping area and one inside each bedroom or sleeping area. We also recommend that you install a CO alarm on every separate living level of your home.

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#### **Where should I avoid installing my CO alarm?**

Avoid installing your CO alarm near bathrooms or in shower areas; in closets, crawlspaces, unused attics or unheated areas; within 5 feet of any fuel burning appliance; within one foot of any wall or corner; in rooms where chemicals or cleaning supplies are frequently used; directly above a sink, bathtub or basin; directly above or below air exchange or heating vents and behind drapes, furniture or appliances or in any other dead air space.

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**What should I do if my CO alarm sounds?**

This depends on the type of detector. If no one in the house is experiencing the above mentioned signs of CO illness, push the test/reset button. One common fix for an intermittent alarm is changing the detectors battery. This should be done every six months along with your smoke detectors at the time change. If this still does not solve the problem, you can remove the detector and check for the manufactured date. If the detector is older than 5 years it should be replaced. Feel free to call our non-emergency number 815-469-1700 and we will assist you.

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**How often should my CO alarm be replaced?**

All residential CO alarms should be replaced immediately if they do not respond to their test button. Additionally, CO alarms should be replaced after 5 years of service. A CO alarm is operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and therefore after 5 years should be replaced even if it is still working. This insures optimal safety and security

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**What do the lights on the front of my CO only alarm signify?**

The green "On" LED (light emitting diode) is indicating that your CO alarm is receiving 120VAC power and should remain on constantly when power is applied. The amber "Service" LED indicates there is a problem with the CO alarm. If this LED is illuminated and accompanied by a beep every 30 seconds, the CO alarm should be replaced immediately. The red "Alarm" LED indicates the presence of CO. This LED will be accompanied by the alarm horn sounding and indicates that you should move to fresh air immediately. The red "Alarm" LED on a combination detector indicates a smoke detector activation. A blue "Alarm" LED generally indicates the CO activation.

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**Do I need to replace the sensor in my CO alarm?**

No, your CO alarm has a built in sensor that does not require replacement.

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**Does my CO alarm require cleaning?**

Your CO alarm does not require any maintenance except for occasional dusting or cleaning of the cover. If necessary, gently vacuum the case of the CO alarm. To clean the cover, disconnect the CO alarm and use a damp cloth to wipe the cover. Do not use any chemicals when cleaning the CO alarm

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**What amount of CO will cause my CO alarm to activate into alarm?**

Your CO alarm works within the industry guidelines of UL2034 and will alarm at a level of 70PPM (parts per million) of CO concentration within 240 minutes. As the level of CO concentration increases, this time frame decreases. For example, at a level of 400PPM of CO concentration your CO alarm will alarm within 15 minutes.

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**Can my CO alarm be used in a recreation vehicle?**

No, your CO alarm is not rated for use in recreational vehicles.

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**Can I interconnect my CO alarm with a smoke alarm?**

No, CO alarms are designed only to be interconnected with other CO alarms of the same model.

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**What can I do to prevent CO problems in my home?**

Have your appliances that use fossil fuels tested annually. Have your chimney cleaned by a certified chimney sweep once a year. Change furnace filters regularly.

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