

## A Public Service Fact Sheet

### 10 Facts You Should Know About Carbon Monoxide Poisoning & Detection Devices For The Home & Office

1. What is Carbon Monoxide?

CO is an invisible, toxic, flammable gas that cannot be noticed by humans or pets. It is the result of incomplete combustion primarily from fossil fuel burning sources.

2. What sources does it come from?

Common sources of CO are hot water heaters, boilers, portable generators, fire places, gas appliances, engine powered tools, lawnmowers, grills, and car exhaust.

3. Can I notice CO poisoning right away like I do with a fire condition?

No, a fire condition produces flame and smoke that you can see, hear, feel and smell. CO is a poisonous colorless, tasteless and odorless gas, that is why it referred to as the "Silent Killer".

4. How does it affect someone?

**Acute Poisoning**— One-time high-level accidental poisoning.

*Symptoms of Acute CO Poisoning: Headaches, Nausea, Malaise and Fatigue.*

**Chronic Poisoning**— Multiple low-level poisonings over a long period of time.

*Symptoms of Chronic CO Poisoning: Headaches, lightheadedness, depression, confusion, memory loss, nausea and vomiting.*

5. Does everyone get effected the same way?

No, individuals who are elderly, very young, or those with medical problems may be effected more seriously.

See the manufacturers product literature and also the EPA Fact Sheet on CO dated January 2009 which we can provide you with a copy.

6. How can I prevent it from being a problem in my home or business and how can I alert my family or staff to the presence of Carbon Monoxide?

Make sure that you have your heating equipment and exhausts checked and cleaned regularly. CO detectors, alarms and monitors are used to detect the presence of CO. Ask Briscoe, or another alarm professional which is the appropriate use in your home or office.

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7. **How do these Carbon Monoxide Detection devices work?**  
They are designed to sense the presence of CO and will either go into alarm or alert over time depending on the type of device.  
Detectors – are connected to a fire alarm panel and will Alarm at 70 ppm over 60-240 min. Higher concentrations will Alarm at shorter intervals, and are used in Commercial buildings.  
Alarms- are battery operated or plug in units that follow the same guidelines as Detectors and are used in Residences.  
Monitors- Depending on the manufacturer can detect low levels and alert for CO detected as low as 5-10ppm.
8. **Do Carbon Monoxide Devices fully protect my family or staff against the effects of CO Poisoning?**  
The best detection against CO Poisoning would be to use BOTH CO devices AND a low level sensing CO Monitor because they protect not only healthy adults, but children, asthmatics, pregnant women and the elderly with heart ailments.
9. **Are there laws that require me to install CO detectors in my Home and Business?**  
Yes, there are laws that will vary by jurisdiction. In New York State, Amanda's Law has been in effect since 2010 and pertains to residences. Most jurisdictions have not had CO laws in place until recent deaths from CO poisonings in Commercial buildings have occurred. It is important to ask Briscoe or another alarm professional what new laws apply to your building.
10. **When a CO device reads 0 or 00 on a digital display does that mean that no CO is present in the Air?**  
No, contrary to the popular understanding, UL requires that detectors and alarms automatically display "0" or "00" on the CO display screen until the concentration reaches 30 PPM. ONLY CO Monitors can automatically display at readings below 30 PPM.

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**Please Note:**

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning and Deaths ARE NOT isolated incidents. The Centers for Disease Control CDC, in their August 2011 report states that CO poisoning is the leading cause of unintentional poisoning deaths in the U.S. Unintentional, non-fire related CO poisoning is responsible for approximately 15,000 emergency room visits and nearly 500 deaths in the US each year.

If you have questions or would like copies of additional documents mentioned in this Fact Sheet please contact:

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