

Carbon Monoxide (CO) & Generator Safety

Carbon monoxide (CO)

- Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas.
- CO is present when fuel is burned in engines, furnaces, and open fires.
- Fuels that can produce CO when burned include gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane.
- Breathing high levels of CO causes CO poisoning, which can cause severe illness or even death in just minutes. For this reason, CO is often referred to as an invisible killer.
- The primary risk of carbon monoxide poisoning comes from home and garage use of gas generators and from malfunctioning fuel-burning appliances such as home stoves, water heaters, and space heaters.
- Operating such engines and appliances in a confined space can cause CO to accumulate to toxic concentrations very quickly.
- Combination smoke and CO detectors can alert people to CO and save lives.
- See a doctor immediately or go to the emergency department if you or someone you know has these symptoms:
- The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are:
 - Headache
 - Dizziness
 - Weakness
 - Upset stomach
 - Vomiting
 - Chest pain
 - Confusion
 - CO symptoms are often described as “flu-like”
- Everyone is at risk for CO poisoning. Infants, the elderly, and people with chronic heart disease, anemia, or breathing problems are more likely to get sick from CO.

Generator safety

- Never use portable generators indoors. This includes a garage, carport, basement, crawl space, or other enclosed or partially enclosed area, even those with ventilation.
- Gas-powered generators produce carbon monoxide, which is odorless and colorless. Inhaling carbon monoxide can very quickly lead to full incapacitation or death.
- Opening windows or doors or using fans will not prevent the buildup of carbon monoxide.
- If you start to feel sick, dizzy or weak while using a generator, get to fresh air immediately.
- Place generators outside, more than 20 feet away from the home, doors, windows, and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors. Do not refuel when hot.
- Keep the generator dry and do not use it in wet conditions.

BBQ grill safety

- Never use charcoal grills, propane grills, or portable gas camp stoves indoors, in a garage, or on a screened-in porch.
- Grills produce high levels of carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless, and deadly gas.
- If using a grill outdoors, position the grill in a well-ventilated, outdoor, sheltered area away from snow, ice, and most importantly, away from siding or flammable materials.