Ice Fishing and Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Ice fishing is a fun way to enjoy the outside during winter, but some of the equipment used during ice fishing increases your risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. **You cannot see, taste or smell CO, but it is a poisonous gas that can be deadly when you breathe it in.** All fuel-burning appliances and equipment, including portable generators and heaters, release CO. CO can build up in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces, like ice houses or shanties. It is important to protect yourself and others against CO poisoning while ice fishing.

CO is found where fuel is burned.

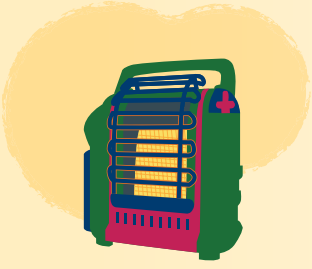
Appliances and equipment that burn carbon-based fuel, like gasoline, charcoal and propane, release CO. Fuel-burning devices often used when ice fishing include:

- Heating equipment (e.g., propane and gas heaters).
- Portable generators.
- Camping stoves.
- Grills.

Be Aware

Use fuel-burning equipment correctly.

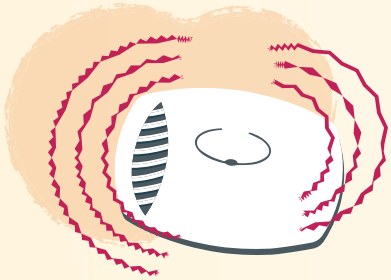
- Make sure fuel-burning appliances and equipment, like propane portable heaters and portable generators, are inspected ever year and in good condition.
- Run portable generators **at least 20 feet** from people and enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. If needed, use an extra-long extension cord with your generator.
- Never use appliances or equipment designed for outdoor use, like charcoal grills, smokers, portable generators or camp stoves, inside a shelter.



Use vents when using heating equipment.

- Make sure heaters, including propane heaters used inside shanties or ice houses, are meant for indoor use and are properly vented.
- Make sure shelters have two vents — one vent at the top and one vent at the bottom that is one foot off the ground.
- Make sure vents are not blocked with snow or any object.

Stay Prepared



Bring a battery-operated CO detector.

- Always bring a battery-operated CO detector with you on fishing trips. **A CO detector is the only way to alert you of CO.**
- Take extra batteries. Cold temperatures drain batteries faster.
- Test your CO detector each time you go on the ice to fish.
- Always have a CO detector on in your shelter. Do not rely on your ventilation system or heater's low oxygen shut-off sensors to work properly.
- Replace your CO detector every five years or according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Know CO poisoning symptoms.

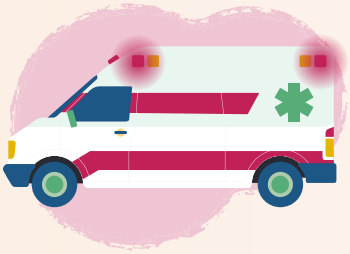
CO poisoning has flu-like symptoms, including:

- Headache.
- Dizziness.
- Nausea.
- Vomiting.
- Fatigue.
- Weakness.
- Chest tightness.
- Confusion.
- Unconsciousness.
- Coma.

Remember: People who are sleeping or intoxicated might not notice CO poisoning symptoms before it's too late.

Symptoms should not be ignored.
You could DIE within minutes if you do nothing.

Get to Fresh Air



If you suspect CO poisoning, have symptoms or if your CO detector goes off:

1. Leave the enclosed or partially enclosed space and move to fresh air right away.
2. Call 911.
3. Stay away from the enclosed or partially enclosed space until the fire department tells you it is safe to return, even if you aren't experiencing symptoms.

CO poisoning is preventable.

Be Aware | Stay Prepared | Get to Fresh Air

Learn more about CO poisoning.

Go to Michigan.gov/CarbonMonoxide
or scan the QR code.

MDHHS
Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

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