Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning During a Power Outage

Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning increases during power outages. The main causes are increased and improper use of fuel-burning appliances and equipment, including portable generators. CO is a poisonous gas that **you cannot see, taste or smell CO, but it can be deadly when you breathe it in**. CO can build up in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces, like homes, garages, carports, basements and porches. It is important to use anything fuel-burning during power outages safely to reduce your risk of CO poisoning.

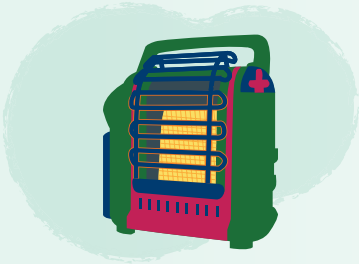
CO is found where carbon-based fuel is burned.

Carbon-based fuels include gasoline, propane, diesel and oil. Common carbon-based fuel-burning appliances and equipment used during power outages are:

- Portable generators.*
- Grills.
- Heaters.
- Stoves.

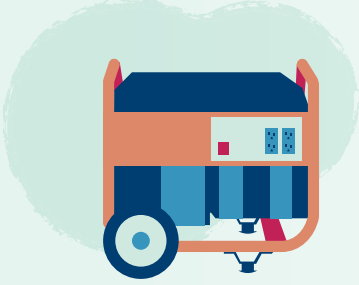
*One portable generator produces hundreds of times more CO than one car.

Be Aware.



Use fuel-burning devices the correct way ...

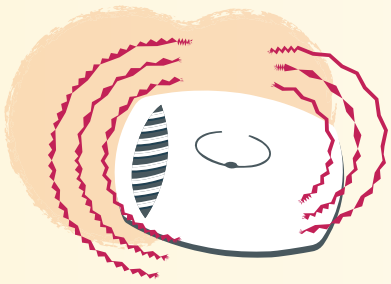
- Use fuel-burning appliances and equipment, like portable generators, grills, camp stoves and heaters, outside only, never inside.
- Use a gas range or oven for cooking, never to heat your home.
- Charcoal should never be burned indoors.



... Including portable generators.

- 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.
- Keep portable generators away from doors, windows or air intake vents.
- Remember CO can build up and linger for hours, even when the portable generator has been shut off.

Stay Prepared.



Install CO detectors.

- Install 10-year lithium battery CO detectors on every level of your home and near all sleeping areas to alert you of CO. **CO detectors save lives!**
- Test CO detectors at least monthly.
- If you do not have lithium battery CO detectors, replace alkaline batteries twice a year. An easy way to remember is during time changes (spring and fall).
- Replace your CO detector according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Know CO poisoning symptoms.

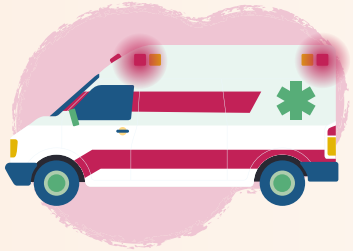
CO poisoning has flu-like symptoms, including:

- 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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