Carbon Monoxide Poisoning: Festivals, Fairs and Other Gatherings

Michigan communities host many types of gatherings from music festivals to county fairs to parades to outdoor markets. These events often require the use of fuel-burning equipment, like portable generators and vehicles. All fuel-burning appliances and equipment give off a poisonous gas called carbon monoxide (CO). **You cannot see, taste or smell CO, but it can be deadly when you breathe it in.** CO can build up in enclosed and partially enclosed areas leading to CO poisoning. Learn how to protect yourself from CO poisoning at gatherings.

All fuel-burning devices give off

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

- Portable generators.
- Portable heaters.
- Grills/smokers.
- Vehicles, like cars, trucks, food trucks and RVs.

CO builds up in enclosed and partially enclosed spaces.

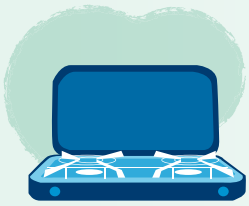
CO can build up in enclosed and partially enclosed spaces where ventilation is poor, including:

- Barns.
- Carports.
- Campers.
- Canopies.
- Tents.
- Trailers.
- Vehicles (e.g., cars, trucks, food trucks and RVs).
- Warehouses.

Be Aware.

Be cautious of vehicle exhaust.

- Have fuel-burning vehicles, including RVs, inspected at least once a year. Repair exhaust leaks right away. CO can build up inside the car from leaks.
- Never run fuel-burning vehicles, including food trucks and RVs, in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces.
- Never sit in a parked vehicle with the engine running for a long period of time.
- When your car is running and your liftgate is open, CO is being pulled in. It's best to turn the vehicle off.



Use fuel-burning equipment the correct way.

- Have fuel-burning appliances and equipment designed for indoor-use in RVs and campers inspected by a professional every year to make sure these items are working correctly and vented properly.
- Read and follow ALL fuel-burning appliance and equipment instructions.
- Never use fuel-burning appliances and equipment intended for outdoor use when inside.
- Make sure vents are cleared of debris on campers and RVs.

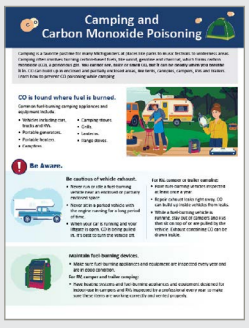
... Including portable generators.

- Use portable generators outside. Never use one inside an enclosed or partially enclosed space.
- Run portable generators **at least 20 feet away** from people and enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. If needed, use an extra-long extension cord with your generator.
- Keep portable generators far from windows, doors and air intakes.
- Remember, CO can build up and linger for hours, even when portable generators have shut off.

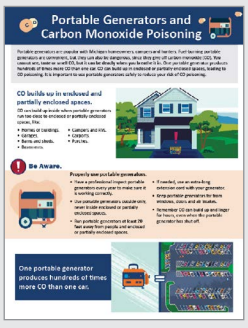
One portable generator produces hundreds of times more CO than one car.

Find Additional CO Poisoning Resources.

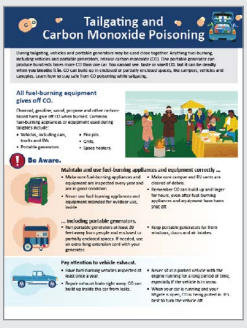
For more information on CO and other topics, check out these fact sheets:



[Camping and Carbon Monoxide Poisoning](#).

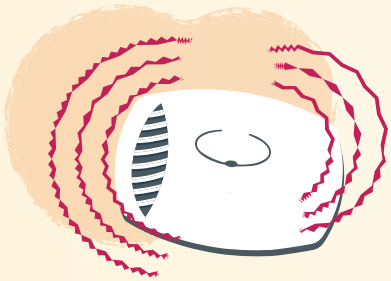


[Generators and Carbon Monoxide](#).



[Tailgating and Carbon Monoxide](#).

Stay Prepared.



Bring a CO detector.

- Consider wearing a small portable CO detector that can clip onto your clothing or a gear bag.
- If you are camping, always bring a battery-operated CO detector with you. Place the CO detector near enough so that an alarm would wake you if you are sleeping.
- Test CO detectors before every use.
- Bring extra batteries.
- Place the CO detector in enclosed or partially enclosed areas.
- Replace batteries twice a year. An easy way to remember is during time changes (spring and fall).
- Replace your CO detector every five years or according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Know CO poisoning symptoms.

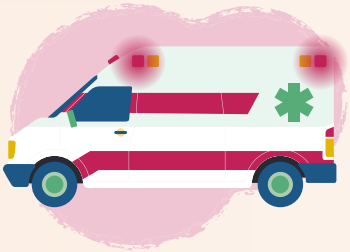
CO poisoning has flu-like symptoms, including:

- 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.

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