Tailgating and Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

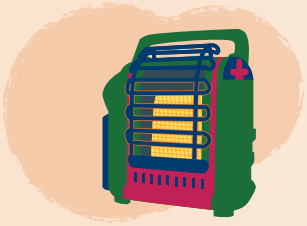
During tailgating, vehicles and portable generators may be used close together. Anything fuel-burning, including vehicles and portable generators, release carbon monoxide (CO). **You cannot see, taste or smell CO, but it can be deadly when you breathe it in.** CO can build up in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces, like campers, vehicles and canopies. One portable generator can produce hundreds times more CO than one car. Learn how to stay safe from CO poisoning while tailgating.

All fuel-burning equipment gives off CO.

Charcoal, gasoline, wood, propane and other carbon-based fuels give off CO when burned. Common fuel-burning appliances or equipment used during tailgates include:

- Vehicles, including cars, trucks and RVs.
- Portable generators.
- Fire pits.
- Grills.
- Space heaters.

Be Aware.

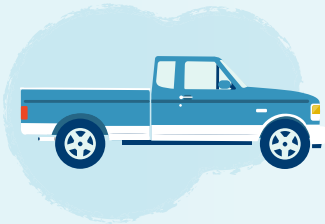


Maintain and use fuel-burning appliances and equipment correctly ...

- Make sure fuel-burning appliances and equipment are inspected every year and are in good condition.
- Never use fuel-burning appliances and equipment intended for outdoor use, inside.
- Make sure camper and RV vents are cleared of debris.
- Remember CO can build up and linger for hours, even after fuel-burning appliances and equipment have been shut off.

... Including portable generators.

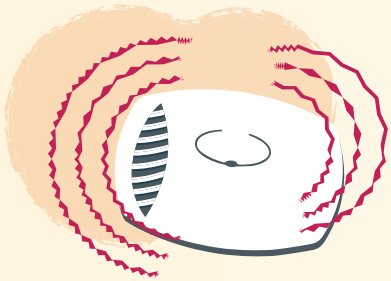
- Run portable generators **at least 20 feet away** from people and enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. If needed, use an extra-long extension cord with your generator.
- Keep portable generators far from windows, doors and air intakes.



Pay attention to vehicle exhaust.

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

Stay Prepared.



Bring a CO detector.

- Bring battery-operated CO detectors while tailgating. Or wear a small portable CO detector that can clip on your clothing or a gear bag. **A CO detector is the only way to alert you of CO.**
- Take extra batteries. Cold temperatures drain batteries faster.
- Test the CO detector before every tailgate.
- 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.

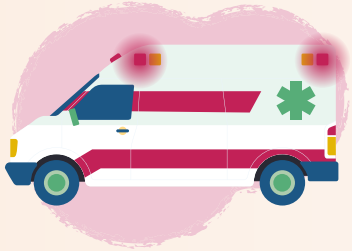
CO poisoning has flu-like symptoms, including:

- 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.

MDHHS
Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

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