

# Carbone monoxide kills

Is there any  
in your home?

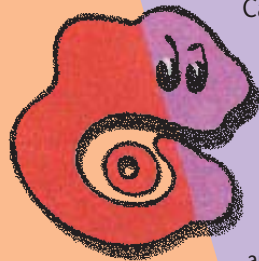
COLORLESS

ODOURLESS

FLAVOURLESS

Québec 

# Carbone monoxide



Carbon monoxide\* (CO) is an odourless, colorless toxic gas. It is produced when a vehicle or piece of equipment burns fuels. When vehicles and fuel-burning equipment are properly used and maintained, the quantity of CO produced is generally not a health hazard. However, if they are not properly operated or are used in a closed or poorly ventilated area, carbon monoxide poisoning can occur.

## Its effects on your health

A mild case of CO poisoning, especially in children, causes symptoms that may resemble those of a cold or gastroenteritis such as nausea, headaches and fatigue. However, a severe case can rapidly lead to loss of consciousness and cause death in a matter of minutes.

### MAIN SYMPTOMS

#### Mild exposure:

Frontal headaches, nausea, fatigue.

#### Moderate exposure:

Persistent pounding frontal headaches, nausea, dizziness or light-headedness, drowsiness, vomiting, racing pulse, loss of reflexes and loss of judgment.

#### Acute exposure:

Weakness, fainting, convulsions, coma, death.



# Where does it come from?

## SOURCES

### Motor vehicles:

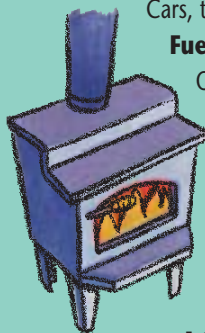
Cars, trucks, motorcycles, snowmobiles, etc.

### Fuel-burning heating systems

Oil, natural gas, propane and wood heating systems.

### Other fuel-burning equipment

Stoves, barbecues, refrigerators, heaters, snow blowers, lawnmowers, chain saws, pumps, generators, lamps, etc.



## LOCATIONS

Home, cottage, fishing or hunting camp, attached or underground garage, temporary car shelter, trailer, tent.



## POSSIBLES CAUSES

**Incomplete combustion** in heating systems or other fuel-burning equipment.

**Poor ventilation** of the area.

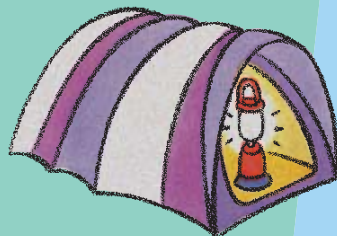
**Obstruction** of the exhaust pipe of a motor vehicle by snow.

**Obstruction** of the chimney by debris, snow or ice.

**Leaks** in the exhaust ducts of heating systems or in the outlets of other fuel-burning equipment.

**Running a motor vehicle** in a garage or temporary car shelter, even with the door open.

**The use of explosives (dynamiting)** near the home.

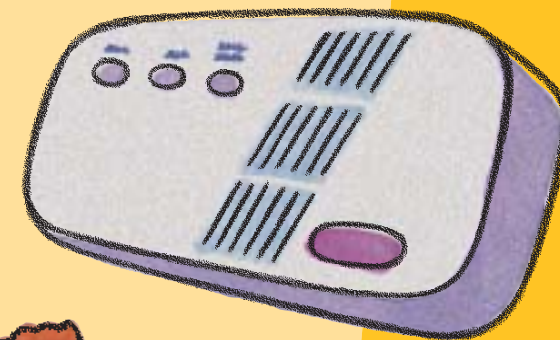


# Preventing CO poisoning

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

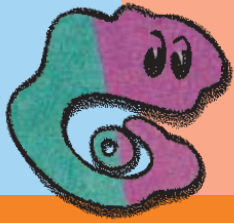
- Check the **condition** of all fuel-burning equipment periodically and follow the safety and maintenance guidelines in the user's manual. Have all such equipment **maintained** by qualified personnel.
- If you have a fuel-burning heating system, follow the recommendations in the **Heating System Checklist**, which is available at the Web address mentioned on the back of this flyer.
- Make sure the furnace **exhaust pipes** and the chimney are in good condition.
- Make sure the **chimney** is not blocked by bird's nests or other debris, or by ice or snow.
- Have the chimney **swept** regularly if you have a slow-burning stove or fireplace.
- Make sure there is a permanent **air intake** for any fuel-burning appliance and that the exhaust is **vented** outside.
- Install residential **generators** outside your home.
- Make sure the range hood for the kitchen stove and the bathroom fan do not **reverse the flow of gases** from any fuel-burning appliance in use at the same time in your home.
- When choosing a propane **refrigerator**, look for a model that vents outdoors and has a built-in CO detector.
- In the winter, remove the snow around your vehicle and tail pipe before starting the motor.
- Have a qualified person inspect the various parts of your vehicle's exhaust system (collector, catalytic converter, muffler and exhaust pipe).

- **Install one or more CO detectors in your house or trailer if there are any potential sources of CO.**
- **Make sure your detectors are certified and check their expiry date.**
- **Install them in the locations recommended by the manufacturer.**
- **Check the batteries periodically, if applicable.**
- **Be careful not to confuse carbon monoxide detectors with smoke detectors.**

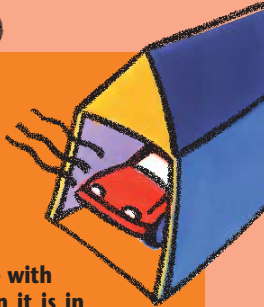


\*Also known as carbonic oxide

# What you should never do



- Never leave the motor running in an attached garage or temporary car shelter, even with the door open.



- Never start a vehicle with a remote starter when it is in an attached garage or temporary car shelter. A close eye should be kept on remote starters, especially when there are young children around.



- Never use a gas stove as a heating system, even for a short period of time.

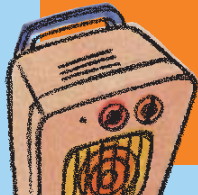
- Never use a barbecue or Hibachi inside a house, cottage, trailer or any other building or in a closed or poorly ventilated area.

- Never use a lamp, stove or other outdoor equipment that emits a flame in a closed area.



- Never obstruct the air inlets or exhaust ducts of fuel-burning appliances in your trailer or home.

- Never operate fuel-burning appliances in a closed or poorly ventilated area (heaters, lawnmowers, hedge trimmers, chain saws, generators, etc.).



# If you think someone is suffering from CO poisoning or that there is CO in the air

Evacuate the contaminated area as soon as someone exhibits symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning (headaches, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, loss of consciousness, convulsions).

Call 911

OR

THE QUEBEC POISON CENTRE  
(1-800-463-5060)

Do not return to the site before receiving the advice of an expert.



If there is a possibility that the source of carbon monoxide is still active, call the fire department. In many communities, fire fighters have the equipment required to measure the CO in the air and find its source.

**If your CO detector goes off, but no one has any symptoms of poisoning:**

- If you are able to do so rapidly and easily, turn off the fuel supply to the appliance involved, open the doors and windows and evacuate the premises.
- Contact the fire department and stay off the premises until the all-clear has been given.

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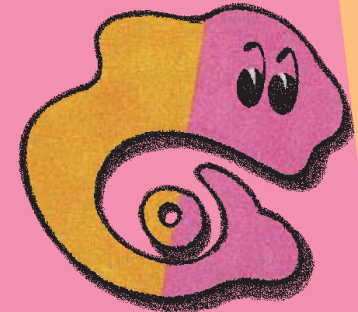
the Comité provincial sur la prévention des intoxications au monoxyde de carbone (provincial committee for the prevention of carbon monoxide poisoning). This committee is mandated by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec, the Institut national de santé publique du Québec and local health and social services network development agencies.

For more information:

[www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/sujets/santepub/environnementale.html](http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/sujets/santepub/environnementale.html)

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Ce dépliant est également disponible en français



Santé  
et Services sociaux

Québec

