

CARBON MONOXIDE POISENING

The health effects of CO depend upon the concentration in the air and the duration of the exposure. Extended exposure to high concentrations will lead to unconsciousness, brain damage or death. However, for those of more vulnerable health, a lower concentration of exposure for longer periods of time may have similar effects as high concentration for brief periods.

The most common misdiagnosis of CO poisoning is a "flu-like" syndrome.

The following are key signs and symptoms of CO and other combustion by-product poisoning:

- Dizziness or headache
- Eye and upper respiratory irritation
- Wheezing or bronchial constriction
- Increased frequency of angina in persons with coronary heart disease
- Elevated blood carboxyhemoglobin levels
- Confusion
- Pain
- Persistent cough

Currently Accepted Medical Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning:

Slight headaches, tiredness, dizziness, and nausea after 2-3 hours	220 PPM
Frontal headaches within 1-2 hours, life threatening after 3 hours	400 PPM
Dizziness, nausea, and convulsions with 45 minutes. Unconsciousness within 2 hours. Death within 2-3 hours	800 PPM
Headache, dizziness, and nausea within 20 minutes. Death within 1 hour.	1600 PPM
Headache, dizziness, and nausea within 1-2 minutes. Death within 10-15 minutes.	6400 PPM

ALL EFFECTS CAN VARY SIGNIFICANTLY BASED UPON AGE, SEX, WEIGHT, AND OVERALL STATE OF HEALTH.

If CO is measured within the living or working space of a building, the following diagnostic approach may aid in the discovery of its generation activity and perhaps its affect on the inhabitants. **The discovery begins with questions.**

- When did the symptoms or complaints begin?
- Does this symptom or complaint exist all the time or does it come and go?
- Is the symptom associated with a particular location or time of day?

- Is the symptom seasonal in nature?
- Does the problem seem to improve, your health improve after you leave a specific place?
- Are the symptoms associated with a change of workplace or living locations?
- Anyone else in the house or building have similar symptoms or complaints?
- Is the symptom associated with the use of any heating or cooking equipment?
- Do you have an attached garage? Do you warm your car up inside with door open?
- Are you a smoker or around smokers during the times of your discomfort?
- Is charcoal being burned indoors in a grill, fireplace, or other cooking device?
- Is there an odor present when heating, cooking, or other combustion appliance in use?
- What types of combustion equipment are in use?
- When was the last time the combustion equipment serviced?
- Does any of the combustion equipment seem to be in disrepair?