

# Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

## Overview:

- You cannot see or smell Carbon monoxide (CO).
- Because of this – people exposed to CO can get very sick and even die before they know they have been exposed to it.
- It is very important to use gas-powered generators and other power equipment properly.
- Not using these correctly while cleaning up after a flood can increase the risk of CO poisoning.

## Where is CO found?

- CO is in combustion fumes, including fumes from cars and trucks, small gasoline engines, stoves, lanterns, burning charcoal and wood, gas ranges, heating systems and generators.
- CO from these sources can build up in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces. People and animals in these spaces can be poisoned by breathing it.

## How to Recognize CO Poisoning:

- The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are: headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion.
- High levels of CO ingestion can cause loss of consciousness and death.

## What should I do if I suspect I've been exposed to CO:

- If you feel sick or dizzy, go outside to fresh air immediately.
- If symptoms persist or worsen, or if a person loses consciousness, consult a health care professional right away.

## Important Prevention Tips:

- Install a battery-operated CO detector in your home and check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall.
- Never run a portable generator, pressure washer, or any portable gasoline-powered engine inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed structure, even if the doors or

windows are open.

- Never run a motor vehicle, generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine outside an open window, door, or vent where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area.
- Never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a garage.
- Never use a charcoal grill, hibachi, lantern, or portable camping stove inside a home, tent, or camper.

**Resources:**

- FEMA: [Use Generators Safely at Home](#)
- Generator safety video from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and FEMA which includes American Sign Language: [youtube.com/watch?v=n7GfOzABRHA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7GfOzABRHA).
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration information about how to use portable generators safely at [osha.gov/OshDoc/data/Hurricane\\_Facts/portable\\_generator\\_safety.pdf](https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data/Hurricane_Facts/portable_generator_safety.pdf).