

BENTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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Troy Heck, Sheriff
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Topic: **Carbon Monoxide Prevention**

What is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon monoxide is often referred to as CO, which is the chemical symbol. Unlike many gases, CO has no odor, color, taste and it does not irritate your skin. CO gets into your body when you breathe. If you inhale a large amount of CO, your body begins to replace oxygen in your blood with CO. When your body does not get enough oxygen, your tissues break down and eventually death occurs.

Carbon Monoxide can be found in your home, camper, cabin and at work. CO is produced by appliances fueled with natural gas, liquefied petroleum (LP gas), oil, kerosene, coal, or wood. Burning charcoal and running vehicles also produce CO.

Every year over 200 people are unintentionally poisoned by carbon monoxide causing their death. Several thousand people go to hospital emergency rooms for treatment of CO poisoning. The initial symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to the flu, but without the fever. They include headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea and dizziness.

How to Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

- Make sure appliances are installed according to the manufacturer's instructions and local building codes.
- Have heating systems inspected and serviced annually.
- Install a CO detector/alarm. This is not a substitute for the proper use and upkeep of appliances. Install a CO detector in the hallway near every separate sleeping area of the home. Do not cover the detector with furniture or draperies.
- Never burn charcoal inside your home, garage, vehicle or tent.
- Never use portable fuel-burning camping equipment inside a home, garage, vehicle or tent.
- Never leave a vehicle running in an attached garage, even with the garage door open.
- Never service fuel-burning appliances without proper knowledge. Refer to the owner's manual.
- Never use gas appliances such as ranges, ovens, or clothes dryers for heating your home.
- Never operate non-vented fuel-burning appliances in any room with closed doors or windows.
- Do not use gasoline powered tools and engines indoors. If unavoidable, ensure adequate ventilation.
- CO detectors/alarms are available for boats and recreational vehicles and should be used.
- Install indoor vent pipes slightly upward as they go toward outdoors. This helps prevent CO and other gases from leaking if the joints or pipes aren't fitted tightly.
- Have a mechanic check your vehicle exhaust system every year.