



### PREVENTION AND SAFETY TIPS

To safeguard your family from the possible buildup of CO in your home, you should consider the following precautions:

- Before each heating season, have your chimney, fuel-burning appliances and heating systems checked by a qualified heating and ventilation professional.
- Make sure appliance vents and exhaust ducts, such as those on water heaters, dryers and ranges, are not blocked, are in operable condition, and are properly ventilated outdoors.
- Never operate a motor vehicle or other gas-powered engine in an enclosed space, such as in a garage. Leaving the garage door open does not reduce the chance of exhaust fumes building up and leaking CO into a building.
- Never operate a portable charcoal or propane grill indoors.
- When using an approved unvented natural gas space heater for supplementary heat, open a window an inch or more as stated in the natural gas space heater operating instructions.
- If you suspect a natural gas leak, vacate the building immediately and call Ameren Missouri at **1.800.552.7583**.



### HOW TO CONTACT AMEREN MISSOURI

Customer Support:  
**1.800.552.7583**

To request a natural gas safety awareness presentation:  
**MoGasSafetyPrograms@ameren.com**

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### TO LEARN MORE

For more CO and natural gas safety tips, visit  
**Ameren.com/NaturalGasSafety**

Missouri Department of Public Safety  
**dfs.dps.mo.gov**

U.S. Fire Administration  
**usfa.fema.gov**



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## CARBON MONOXIDE

It's Enough to Take Your Breath Away!





# CARBON MONOXIDE

Every year, carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning kills hundreds of Americans and puts thousands more in the hospital. CO is a tasteless, odorless gas created when there's not enough oxygen present for fuel to burn properly. Poisoning and illness can occur when fossil fuels and other materials are burned without proper ventilation. Potential sources of CO can be found where improper burning of gasoline, natural gas, propane, kerosene, coal, wood and charcoal occur, such as:

- Automobile exhaust fumes
- Natural gas appliances (furnaces, ranges, ovens, water heaters, clothes dryers, etc.)
- Coal or oil furnaces
- Fireplaces, wood stoves and chimneys
- Portable gas-powered space heaters and oil or kerosene heaters
- Charcoal grills and camp stoves
- Natural gas-powered generators, lawn mowers and power tools

## KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

CO poisoning rapidly displaces oxygen levels and affects the brain and heart the most. Symptoms of illness caused by CO exposure may initially be similar to the flu. Clearer symptoms of CO poisoning can include:

- Headache
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Unconsciousness
- Confusion
- Blurred Vision
- Drowsiness
- Increased episodes of angina (chest pain or discomfort)

As the concentrations of CO in the bloodstream increase, symptoms will progress from relatively mild to severe. If inhaled in large quantities for a prolonged period of time, CO can cause unconsciousness, brain damage and even death. Breathing in CO can be especially dangerous for individuals who are asleep or intoxicated, unborn babies, infants and children, and older adults.



## CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTION

As a first line of defense, install CO detectors in a central location outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of your home, and test them monthly. When choosing a CO detector, be sure that it has the Underwriter Laboratories (UL) stamp of approval to ensure that the detector will consistently activate when exposed to unsafe levels of CO.

There are many visible signs that indicate the presence of CO. Some of these are:

- Black soot on or around air registers, flues, burners or access openings to appliances
- Condensation of moisture on the inside surface of windows. Be advised that humidifiers and vaporizers can also cause condensation.
- Unexplained illness or death of indoor pets
- Abnormal flame characteristics, such as a yellow natural gas flame instead of blue, flames rolling out of the front of an appliance or flames lifting off the burner. Be advised that humidifiers and vaporizers add moisture to the air and can alter the air-to-fuel ratio in a natural gas flame, changing the color toward orange.

## CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

First and foremost, stay calm and follow these guidelines:

- **Dial 911 and vacate the premises** if anyone in the household is feeling ill and you suspect CO poisoning. Your local first responder(s) will evaluate the exposure to CO and coordinate medical treatment if necessary. Contact a qualified heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) professional to inspect your system.
- If no one in the household is feeling ill yet you suspect a CO problem, ventilate the home by opening the doors and windows, and call a qualified HVAC professional to inspect your system.

**NATURAL GAS LEAK AWARENESS** If you smell an odor of natural gas or hear a hissing or leaking sound, immediately leave the premises, taking all people and pets with you. **REPORT NATURAL GAS LEAKS 24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK, BY CALLING AMEREN MISSOURI AT 1.800.552.7583.**