

MDHHS Michigan Department of Health & Human Services | Environmental Health Bureau

Care for MI Environmental Health Newsletter

Safety: A Guide to Fall Carbon Monoxide Resources

November is National Carbon Monoxide (CO) Awareness Month. Learn more about how you can prevent CO poisoning at home.

What is CO and why is it dangerous?

CO is a poisonous gas. It is found wherever fuel is burned. Fuel sources include natural gas, kerosene, gasoline, propane, charcoal, oil and wood. You cannot see, taste or smell CO, but it can be deadly when you breathe it in. That is why CO is known as the "invisible killer." CO can build up in the air of enclosed and partially enclosed spaces, like houses, garages and sheds. Breathing in CO can cause CO poisoning. You can prevent CO poisoning.

Where and how does CO poisoning happen?

CO poisoning can happen anywhere, but most cases take place at home. In Michigan, the most common CO sources leading to unintentional poisoning include:

- Vehicle exhaust.
- Furnaces.
- Water heaters.
- Stoves and ovens.

How can I prevent CO poisoning?

Some of the ways you can prevent CO poisoning at home, include:

- Never run vehicles in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces, such as an open or closed garage.
- Have vehicles inspected every year.
- Repair vehicle exhaust leaks right away.

- Never use fuel-burning equipment intended for outside use, indoors.
- Every fall, have a professional inspect your heating systems, water heaters and other fuel-burning appliances and equipment to make sure these items are working properly.
- Use portable generators **at least 20 feet** from people and enclosed or partially enclosed spaces.

How can I be prepared against CO poisoning?

- Install CO detectors on all levels of your home and near all sleeping areas.
    - **Make sure to change the alkaline batteries in your CO detector each fall.**
- Make sure your household knows CO poisoning symptoms, which are most commonly headache, dizziness and nausea.

What do I do if I suspect CO poisoning, have symptoms or if the CO detector goes off?

1. Leave the enclosed or partially enclosed space and move to fresh air right away.
2. Call 911.
3. Stay away from the enclosed or partially enclosed space until the fire department tells you it is safe to return, even if you do not have symptoms.

See the **Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning at Home (fact sheet)** to learn more about CO at home.

- Arabic translation.
- Spanish translation.

Find More Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) CO Poisoning Resources

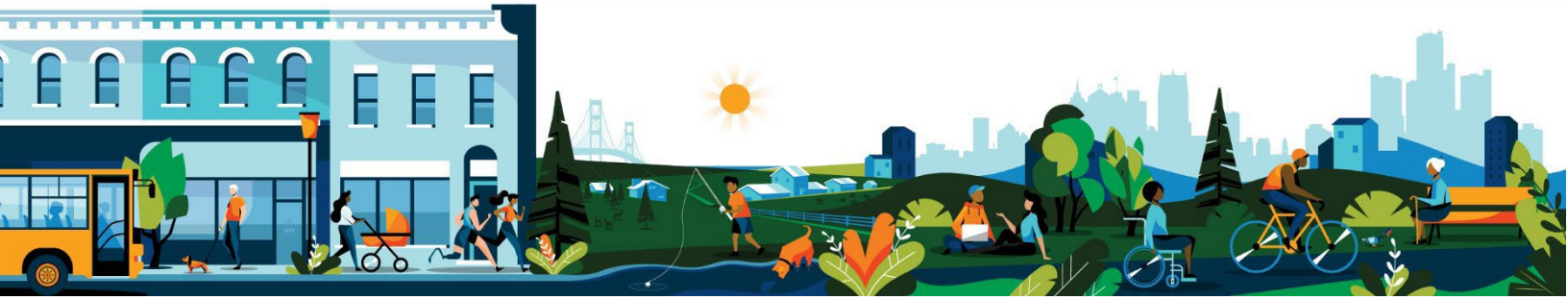
- MDHHS Carbon Monoxide website.
    - Carbon Monoxide Awareness Campaign Media Toolkit, including factsheets, social media and videos.

For questions about this program, contact:

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We aim to provide resources to all. Written translations for the information in this newsletter are available. Please contact your Regional Community Engagement Coordinator for more.