



**OREGON  
POISON  
CENTER**

# Oregon Poison Center

Serving Oregon, Alaska, and Guam

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## Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, tasteless gas produced whenever fossil fuel is burned. Malfunctioning or improperly maintained chimneys, gas-powered heating systems, water heaters and any other gas, oil, or coal burning appliances can be a source of CO build-up and lead to CO poisoning. Indoor use of outdoor camp stoves or charcoal grills can also result in the accumulation of CO. Winter weather, cold temperatures and power outages may cause homeowners to seek alternative ways of heating their homes that can put them at risk for CO Poisoning. This includes the indoor use of portable generators or the use of portable generators too close to a dwelling.

Vehicle exhaust deposited in a garage or inside a vehicle due to a leak in the exhaust system can create a buildup of CO. Keyless-ignition vehicles inadvertently left running in a garage can be especially dangerous because CO from vehicle exhaust can flood a home, poisoning those sleeping inside.

The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. CO can be life threatening at high concentrations. It is called the “silent killer” because it can’t be seen, smelled, or heard and those affected may not know they’ve been exposed before dangerous symptoms appear.

### Carbon Monoxide Safety Tips:

- Install a battery-operated or battery back-up CO detector on every level of your home. Check or replace the device's battery regularly to ensure detectors are working properly. If the detector alarms, leave your home immediately and call 911.
- Have your fireplace, heating system, water heater and any other gas, oil, or coal-burning appliance serviced by a qualified technician every year.
- Never heat your home with a gas oven, stove, or hibachi. Do not use outdoor grills indoors.
- Use portable generators outdoors, at least 25 feet away from a window, door or vent. Basements and garages are not safe locations to run a generator, even with doors and windows open.
- Make sure your vehicle's tailpipe is completely clear of snow and debris before turning on your vehicle to prevent CO accumulation inside your car.
- After parking a keyless vehicle, double-check that the engine is turned off before closing the garage door and entering the home. Check with your vehicle's manufacturer about any additional warning signals and safety features.
- For more information visit [www.cdc.gov/co](http://www.cdc.gov/co)

**Call 1-800-222-1222 for Poison Help. Specialist are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

**DESIGNATED AS A REGIONAL POISON CONTROL CENTER BY THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
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