



Crime Prevention Products

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How safe is your family?

Carbon Monoxide Information Leaflet



Potential danger areas in your home:

Water heater

Clogged chimney or flue

Gas, coal or wood fire

Boiler or heater

Car fumes from garage

Portable cooking equipment used in enclosed areas

Portable gas or paraffin heater

Kitchen cooker

What is carbon monoxide (CO) and where does it come from?

Carbon monoxide is a highly poisonous gas produced when any fossil fuel burns incompletely. It has no smell, taste or colour. It leaks from flues, cooking and heating appliances when they have been poorly maintained or simply break down. Even adverse weather conditions have been given as the official reason behind leaks of CO that proved fatal.

What can CO do to me?

Carbon monoxide bonds with the haemoglobin in your blood and subsequently replaces the oxygen needed to sustain your brain and body. It can kill quickly when it leaks in large quantities or can build up over a period of time, initially causing symptoms such as headaches, nausea and dizziness. These are often incorrectly diagnosed by the medical profession as flu.

Who is at risk from CO poisoning?

All humans and animals are at risk from carbon monoxide poisoning. No one is immune. Experts believe there are in excess of 200 deaths in the UK each year and many more injuries from CO poisoning in the home. Those most at risk are young children, the elderly, pregnant women and people with respiratory problems.

How do I know if I am suffering from CO poisoning?

It is very difficult to diagnose CO poisoning because of its similarity to other illnesses such as flu.

However, asking yourself the following questions may help:

1. Are others in the house feeling ill as well?
2. When you leave the house for a period of time, do you feel any better?

If the answer is yes then you may be suffering from CO poisoning. The only way to be sure is to see your doctor and request a carboxyhaemoglobin test. This will tell you the amount of CO present in your blood.



What can I do to protect myself?

Always ensure that your appliances are regularly serviced by a CORGI registered installer. This will reduce the chance of a CO leak but not eliminate it as appliances can become faulty and flues blocked in between service dates. For added safety and peace of mind you should fit an alarm which is officially approved and Kite marked to the latest European Standard EN50291. Also, look for alarms which are officially approved by CORGI. You can also fit Carbon Monoxide Detector Patches which are useful when travelling. They work by changing colour if CO is present.

Where should I put a CO alarm?

It is recommended that a CO alarm is used in or near every room that contains a heating or cooking appliance. The European Standard states that the alarm should be located within 12 inches of the ceiling, for the following reasons:

1. CO is approximately the same density as air and being produced by cooking and heating appliances, will be released with warm air which will initially rise.
 2. The alarm sensors must not be obstructed by furniture.
- All Kite marked alarms include full installation instructions.

