



If you require this leaflet in an alternative format or if you wish to find out more please contact:

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Together we enrich lives

Carbon Monoxide (CO)

Don't:

- Try to repair gas appliances or pipework yourself
- Use any appliance if you suspect it might be faulty
- Use barbeques or generators indoors
- Use paraffin or bottled gas heaters

Do:

- Use appliances only for the purpose for which they were designed, e.g. **do not** use a cooker to heat a room, and always follow the operating instructions
- If undertaking alterations to your home which may affect the safety or efficiency of your heating installation you must seek our permission
- Ensure your own appliances such as cookers are regularly serviced by a 'Gas Safe' registered engineer
- Ensure you recognise the difference between an alarm activation and an audible battery warning

If your carbon monoxide alarm sounds or you suspect a leak:

- Open doors and windows to ventilate the property and switch off all fuel burning appliances
- Evacuate the property immediately; stay calm and avoid raising your heart rate (unlike in a fire situation, doors and windows should be left open where possible)
- Call the relevant emergency advice line: Gas Emergency Service on 0800 002 001 or Oil (OFTEC) 0845 65 85 080, to report the incident
- Don't go back into the property; wait for advice from the emergency services
- Seek immediate medical help if you feel unwell or there is a confirmed CO incident;
- Contact Choice on **0300 111 2211**

CARBON MONOXIDE (CO)

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas sometimes called the 'silent killer' because you cannot taste, see or smell it.

What causes it?

CO is produced when any type of fuel (e.g. oil, wood, coal and gas) is incompletely burned. This usually only happens when appliances are incorrectly fitted, maintained, tampered with, damaged or poorly ventilated.

Recognise the signs!

Typical signs of faulty appliances include:

- Gas appliances with lazy yellow or orange flames rather than blue flames (except fuel effect fires)
- Soot or yellow/brown stains around appliances
- Pilot lights (where fitted) that frequently blow out
- Increased, unexpected condensation around windows in the room where the appliance is installed



Recognise the symptoms!

Inhaling CO reduces the oxygen carrying capability of the blood and leaves vital organs and tissue starved of oxygen. Every year in the UK, around 4000 people visit an A&E department with suspected CO poisoning and around 60 people die as a direct result of exposure to CO. Many more people die as a result of strokes and respiratory illness made worse by inhaling low levels of CO over prolonged periods.

Early symptoms of CO poisoning can mimic many common ailments and may easily be confused with food poisoning, viral infections, flu or simple tiredness.

Those at particular risk include babies and young children, pregnant women and people with heart or breathing problems. The smaller the person or animal, the faster CO will affect them.

Symptoms are dependent on the levels of CO and may range from mild where there are low levels of CO to severe/deadly within seconds where levels are very high.

Be alert to symptoms improving when you go out or others in your home are affected.

Symptoms to look out for include:

- breathlessness
- nausea or vomiting
- drowsiness, tiredness, sudden collapse or loss of consciousness
- headaches and/or pains in the chest or stomach
- erratic behaviour, confusion, irritability or difficulty in concentrating
- visual problems

What can I Do?

Ensure your appliances are correctly installed and serviced annually. As a landlord we are legally required to service your gas boiler (if fitted) annually. It is essential that you allow us access. We will also service oil boilers and solid fuel burners annually. Our contractor will contact you in advance to advise when they intend to service your boiler. Please contact them immediately if the proposed date does not suit. Your tenancy is in jeopardy if you do not cooperate. We will seek to recover any additional costs from you.

If you have an open fire, you must have the chimney swept regularly. We also recommend that you use good quality smokeless fuel appropriate for your appliance type. Ensure that rooms in your home containing heating appliances are properly ventilated and never block vents.

Choice fit detectors as standard which you must check and test regularly. If necessary, replace batteries. You may fit one yourself but you must ensure it is properly fitted, tested and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Only detectors to BS EN 50291 and CE or Kite marked should be used.

Remember that CO can enter your home from appliances fitted in neighbouring properties.