



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru

Mid and West Wales
Fire and Rescue Service



CARBON MONOXIDE

The Silent Killer

Despite widespread publicity, it has been reported that in the UK between 20 and 30 people die each year in their homes from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning.



Free Safe & Well Visits
Telephone: 0800 169 1234

Carbon Monoxide Facts

What?

Carbon Monoxide is a poisonous gas that is colourless, odourless and tasteless and is produced when a carbon fuel is burned (e.g. Oil, Gas, Wood, Coal etc).

How?

By starving the cells of oxygen and poisoning the body.

When?

By burning any carbon based fuel e.g. gas, coal, coke, oil, petrol, wood, etc without enough ventilation.

The fuels still burn but rather than producing carbon dioxide they produce potentially lethal carbon monoxide.

Who?

It can affect anyone who is burning carbon based fuel in an enclosed area.

It can affect old and new properties.

What are the symptoms?

The effects are like everyday illnesses so can be difficult to detect, but may include:

- Headache, dizziness and nausea;
- Drowsiness and a feeling of weakness.

Do not ignore these symptoms if:

- Other people in the same building have similar problems;
- You've recently moved into the building;
- You've had a new appliance fitted e.g. heating or a cooker;
- You've had work carried out that might affect ventilation e.g. double glazing;
- You feel better when out of the building; or
- You've recently switched the heating on.

If affected, what action do I take?

- Go into fresh air.
- Seek medical attention immediately.
- Do not use the appliance until it has been examined by a registered engineer.
- For gas fuelled appliances – phone GAS SAFE REGISTER on 0800 408 5500
- For oil fuelled appliances – phone OFTEC on 0845 658 5080
- For solid fuel – phone HETAS on 0845 634 5626

What can I do to prevent Carbon Monoxide poisoning?

Keep ventilated

- Ensure there is enough oxygen wherever fuel is being burnt.
- Homes are changing, for example, with double glazing, so we don't have 'natural' draughts and may need ventilation fitted. That can be with a flue leading outside, or an existing opening such as a chimney.
- Floodwater and the build up of silt or debris can affect ventilation and cause gas to build up. Get checked by an accredited engineer.

Keep flues clear

- External flues may be blocked by vegetation growing over the outlet, or debris and birds nests may block a chimney.
- Sometimes, venting of gases is not possible e.g. in a garage. In these circumstances a through-flow of air is essential to prevent gas building up.

Keep serviced - old and new appliances

- Services should include a 'venting of gases' check. For gas appliances, engineers must be Gas Safe Registered.
- Appliances not used for a long time should be serviced before use.

Keep safe - install working Carbon Monoxide detectors

- Carbon monoxide detectors are a valuable safety precaution and can be purchased from many reputable high street retailers.
- Make sure they are British or European standard approved.
- Don't use indoor camping stoves or other gasoline, propane or natural gas devices that are meant for outdoor use.

What help can I get?

- Manufacturers of boilers and fires provide clear guidance as to ventilation and flue requirements and all new installations should comply with these.
- It is vital that all carbon fuel-burning appliances are used in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations, and fitted and serviced by an accredited engineer.
- Landlords have a responsibility to ensure that all appliances are safe, but tenants must also ask if appliances are safe before moving in.



Free Safe & Well Visit

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Further information on gas safety and the risks to health is available from a number of sources.

HSE's Gas Safety Advice Line is available on 0800 300 363

For health issues and symptoms **NHS Direct Wales** 0845 46 47 or www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

To find a **Gas Safe Registered Engineer** go to the **Gas Safe** website www.gassaferegister.co.uk or call 0800 408 5500

To find an **OFTEC Registered Engineer** for work on oil or solid fuel appliances go to www.oftec.co.uk

To find a **HETAS** approved company or engineer for biomass and other solid fuel appliances go to www.hetas.co.uk

For suspected gas leaks, contact the **National Gas Emergency Service:** 0800 111 999

For information about Carbon Monoxide and Carbon Monoxide poisoning <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/carbon-monoxide/>



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Diogelwch Cymunedol
Community Safety