

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

By Dave Short

Why should we have carbon monoxide (CO) alarms? Because CO is deadly. It is a colorless, odorless gas that enters our bloodstream and bonds with our red blood cells. It keeps oxygen from attaching to red blood cells. You cannot see it or smell it so it's called "The Silent Killer".



CO is always in our homes at low levels that our bodies can handle. CO comes from gas ovens and ranges, water heaters, furnaces, gas clothes dryers, and cigarettes. If your gas appliances have a yellow flame instead of blue, get them checked by PG&E. A yellow flame means that the gas is not burning properly and CO is the result.

When you hear beeping, what should you do? Get everyone outside, then call 911. Open windows and doors and turn off any gas burning appliances.

The beeps: 1 beep – new battery, 4 beeps – CO detected, 5 beeps – end of unit's life. Some manufacturers use different patterns, check the instructions.

Maintenance is minimal, but don't ignore the alarm for it's 7 to 10 year lifespan. Test monthly by pressing the test/reset button. This tests the battery, circuitry and speaker. Pressurized air can be used to remove dust inside the unit. Change the batteries yearly. Neighbors InDeed has stickers available for you to write the date of battery changes.

The symptoms of CO poisoning are a headache, cherry red lips and nail beds, unconsciousness and death. If you survive a significant exposure, it can cause brain damage.

A few folks in our community have removed the CO alarm from their homes because "it was just too much trouble". Do not do that to yourself.

Remember that we do not answer the phone. Leave a message at 916-223-2763, we will return your call as promptly as possible.