

## About Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a highly dangerous toxic gas that can kill. It is produced by any fossil fuel (e.g. gas, coal, oil, wood, charcoal) that burns incompletely. The silent killer has no smell, taste or colour.

Everyone is at risk from CO poisoning. It bonds with haemoglobin in your blood and replaces the oxygen needed to sustain your brain and body. It can kill if you are exposed to large quantities or build up over time. Symptoms include dizziness, nausea and headaches. These are often misdiagnosed by the medical profession.

The Department of Health believe that as many as 40 people die in England and Wales each year, with 200 being admitted to hospital and many more being treated and sent home. They believe that these figures underestimate the problem due to the difficulties in diagnosis.

Initiatives by Government and industry have led to a significant reduction in the number of deaths from natural gas over the last 20 years. However, as the Trust's recent Downstream Incident Data Report highlights, there is no room for complacency. People are still putting themselves at an avoidable risk of death and injury, and it is now other sources that are the main cause of CO poisoning. One emerging danger is from barbecues where media reports suggest over a dozen people may have died over the last 2 years. Consequently, the Gas Safety Trust has broadened its remit to take this into account.



The silent killer has no  
smell, taste or colour

### Contact us

If you are interested in applying to the Gas Safety Trust for funding, you can find full details on our website

[www.gas-safety-trust.org.uk](http://www.gas-safety-trust.org.uk)

Or by calling 0207 706 5111

or email [info@gstrust.org.uk](mailto:info@gstrust.org.uk)



The Gas Safety Trust is a non-profit making organization. The primary objective for the Trust is to work towards reducing the number of deaths and serious injury in the UK from fuel related incidents. It is an independent organisation, free from the influence of external stakeholders.

Registered Charity Number 1110624 © Gas Safety Trust 2013

# CARBON MONOXIDE a burning issue



All-Party Parliamentary  
**carbonmonoxide**  
Group

gas<sup>™</sup>  
safety  
trust

## About GST

The Gas Safety Trust, established in 2005 as a registered charitable body, has become the UK's leading gas safety charity with the key objectives of further improving gas/fossil fuel safety for the public and industry throughout the United Kingdom and reducing the incidents of death and serious injury from carbon monoxide (CO) exposure.

# gas safety trust™

We provide grant funding, advice and support to any organisation, business, statutory and voluntary bodies and charitable/not for profit organisations to support the following key areas relating to gas and fuel safety:

- Research
- Evidence gathering
- Training and education
- Advocacy

Legislative changes, along with proactive decisions taken by the industry itself over the last 40 years have contributed to the significant progress in gas safety and awareness. However, we are not being complacent. Working with everyone from politicians to engineers, manufacturers to consumers, we are committed to developing the knowledge base relating to the prevention of CO poisoning and improving gas safety.

The primary funds to support the work of the Gas Safety Trust come from CORGI Services Limited, who licenses the CORGI brand to a select number of businesses supporting the heating, plumbing and renewable industry.

## Are you at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning?



If you think you are suffering from CO exposure you should ask yourself these questions:

- Are others in the house feeling ill too?
- When you leave the house for a period of time do you feel better?

If the answer to either of these is yes, then you may be suffering from CO poisoning and should seek professional advice.

Anyone spending time with faulty appliances is at risk. The most vulnerable are babies and young children, pregnant women and people with heart or breathing problems such as asthma.

**If you have had building work done recently**, such as double glazing installation, or if floodwater has caused the build-up of silt or debris, your property's ventilation may be affected.

**If your flue, chimney, extractor or airway is blocked or leaking**, CO cannot escape and can build up to dangerous levels. If you have shared chimneys or flues CO may be coming from next door.

**Tents, caravans, boats and mobile homes** are at risk because portable appliances that use bottled fuels such as liquid petroleum gas, paraffin or kerosene are often used for heating and cooking.

**Vehicle engine or generator exhaust gases** can also contain high levels of CO.

### How can you protect yourself against CO poisoning?

- Never use outdoor appliances like barbecues, camping stoves and paraffin heaters, indoors
- Fit an audible CO alarm that meets European Standard EN50291
- Take a battery operated CO alarm when camping
- Keep rooms well ventilated when using an appliance
- Ventilate garages when running a car or paraffin generator
- Have all appliances, flues and chimneys installed and serviced by reputable, registered engineers
- Have your chimney completely swept at least once a year
- Ensure your landlord provides the legal annual safety check on installed appliances

## About APPCOG

The All-Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group (APPCOG) provides a forum for Parliamentarians, Government officials, energy industry representatives, charities and other key stakeholders to discuss CO poisoning in relation to all fuel types. The Group has until recently been named 'The All-Party Parliamentary Gas Safety Group' (APPGSG), co-chairs of the group decided to rename the group to focus its efforts on preventing CO poisoning from all fuels, not just gas.



In 2011, the Group conducted a 6-month parliamentary inquiry into CO poisoning. The report, Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisoning, proposes the better use of the detection and diagnosis equipment, and suggests ways in which policymakers and industry can take action to prevent CO poisoning. The implementation of the report's 17 recommendations form the basis of the APPCOG's work in 2012/13.

Co-chairs of the group include:

- Barry Sheerman MP – Labour
- Jason McCartney MP – Conservative
- Baroness Finlay of Llandaff – Cross-bench



For further information please visit the website at

[www.policyconnect.org.uk/appcog](http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/appcog)