

# What's the Risk?

## Carbon Monoxide Detectors



### THE ISSUE

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odourless, colourless and tasteless gas which can cause illness and death. According to Health Canada, everyone is at risk of CO poisoning from indoor sources such as gasoline powered generators or equipment, cigarettes, cooking and household appliances (natural gas or propane stoves, dryers), cars idling in attached garages, fireplaces, woodstoves or heating appliances such as furnaces and water heaters.



### WHAT'S THE RISK?

Exposure to even low levels of carbon monoxide can lead to flu-like symptoms such as tiredness, headaches, shortness of breath, or muscle weakness. People can become disoriented and lose consciousness. Exposures to very high levels can lead to convulsions, coma, or death. Carbon monoxide is created when carbon fuels, such as gasoline, propane, natural gas or wood fail to burn completely. People can be poisoned by a small amount of CO over a long period of time or by a large amount of CO in a short period of time.



### WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Follow these steps to avoid CO poisoning:

1. Install CO alarms in a central location outside each sleeping area of a house and on every level of the home. Be sure to follow provincial, territorial, or federal requirements for the number and placement of the alarms.
2. Have all fuel-burning heating equipment and chimneys inspected by a qualified individual every year before first use in a new season.
3. Only use CO alarms that have been tested and approved by a qualified testing laboratory (ULC, or CSA).
4. Test all CO alarms monthly. Replace them if they do not operate properly or if they are older than 7 years.
5. Never use gas or charcoal barbecues indoors, even in an emergency.
6. Be sure to clean snow or ice from direct vented dryers, water heaters or furnaces.
7. If a CO alarm sounds, do not assume it is from a false trigger. Immediately move your family outdoors to a safe location with fresh air and call emergency personnel for help.

