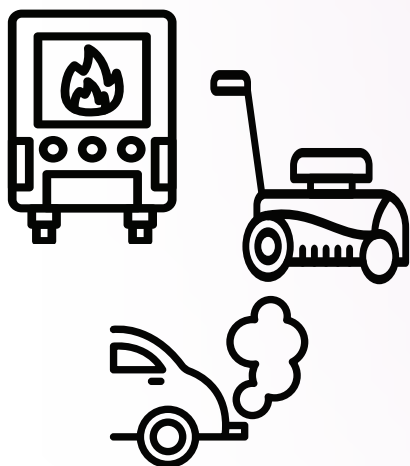


Carbon Monoxide (CO) in Schools

What it is, where it comes from, and ways you can prevent CO poisoning

What is Carbon Monoxide?

- CO is a deadly, toxic gas. It is colorless, odorless, tasteless, and nonirritating.
- It is created when carbon from fossil fuels burns incompletely. These include gasoline, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane.
- CO exposure is the leading cause of poisoning deaths in the United States.
- Each year in New York State about 1,800 people go to the emergency department and 200 are hospitalized because of CO poisoning.

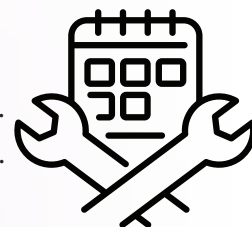


Where Does Carbon Monoxide Come From?

- **Appliances.** Furnaces, fuel-fired boilers, hot water heaters, stoves or gas-ranges, dryers, portable nonelectric space heaters, shop-class equipment, kilns, and Bunsen burners
- **Gas-Powered Equipment.** Generators, lawn mowers, leaf blowers, weed whackers, and pressure washers
- **Vehicle Exhaust.** Idling cars, school buses, delivery vans, and construction equipment
- **Blocked or improperly installed fireplaces, chimneys, and exhaust vents**
- **Portable Generators**

How to Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

- CO alarms that are compliant with Underwriters Laboratories (UL 2034) standards are required in all schools. Alarms should be battery-powered or have battery backup. Check alarms twice a year, and replace them every 7 years.
- Conduct annual maintenance for heating systems and sources.
- Never run a car or school bus inside a garage or structure, even with the door open.
- Never operate generators and other fuel-powered equipment in an enclosed space.
- During snow, be sure that building and vehicle exhaust pipes are not blocked.
- Never use a gas range or oven for warmth.
- Never use a gas or charcoal barbecue grill inside a school or other enclosed space.
- Nonelectric space heaters need to be installed correctly and vented. They also should be checked on a regular schedule and fixed as needed.
- Operate portable generators outdoors and at least 25 feet downwind of buildings.



New York State School Environmental Health Program

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