

Pediatric Health

Carbon Monoxide/Smoke Alarm Gives Verbal Alerts

Industry leading eTailer CableOrganizer.com today announced it is now offering the Kidde® Battery Operated Carbon Monoxide/Smoke Combo Alarm – a family safety essential that gives verbal alerts to thwart user confusion.

The device, which retails at CableOrganizer.com for \$51.64, includes a voice warning system that audibly states “Fire,” “Carbon Monoxide” and “Low Battery” among other warnings, also featuring a “Smart Hush Activation” function that allows users to override – or “hush” - the alarm for up to 10 minutes when anticipating low amounts of smoke from a known source such as cooking. The voice alarm removes any confusion and clearly warns family members of a smoke or carbon monoxide danger, or if the battery is in need of replacement. Because it's battery operated, even if the power goes out the user is protected. More information may be accessed at cableorganizer.com/kidde-alarms/co-smoke-detector-combo.html

Carbon Monoxide Safety Q&A

What is carbon monoxide, and where does it come from?

It's no surprise that carbon monoxide (CO) has been given the nickname “the Silent Killer” – it's an odorless, invisible, highly toxic and deadly gas that is produced from the incomplete combustion of wood and fossil fuels like oil, natural gas, charcoal, kerosene, and gasoline. Unfortunately, carbon monoxide has become a very real threat within our own homes, since it can accumulate when everyday appliances like water heaters, furnaces, ranges, ovens, clothes dryers and space heaters don't work the way they're supposed to. But malfunctioning appliances aren't the only culprits for increased CO levels around the house – poor ventilation can also cause buildups of the poisonous gas if chimney flues or exhaust vents become blocked; grills, wood-burning stoves or fireplaces aren't properly vented; or a

vehicle is left running inside a garage.

Is there such a thing as a “safe” level of carbon monoxide? At what point does carbon monoxide put my family and me at risk?

There's really no agreed-upon safe level of carbon monoxide exposure. Factors like age, body mass and pre-existing health conditions can affect a person's tolerance, and what amounts to mild or moderate CO risk for one person could equal a deadly dose for another. While carbon monoxide is dangerous to everyone, the people most at risk for CO poisoning are infants, unborn babies, children, senior citizens, and those with cardiac and respiratory disorders.

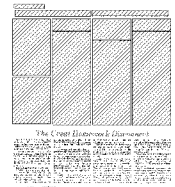
How can I tell if I have carbon monoxide poisoning?

Depending on the level and length of exposure, carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms can vary. Mild exposure can lead to symptoms like fatigue, light headache, flu-like symptoms, nausea, and vomiting. Medium-exposure symptoms can intensify to include elevated heart rate, severe throbbing headache, drowsiness, and confusion or disorientation. The most severe symptoms, associated with the highest levels of carbon monoxide exposure, are unconsciousness, convulsions, and failure of the heart and lungs, which can ultimately result in brain damage and death.

If you ever suspect that either you or someone you're with is suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning, it's extremely important that you promptly move yourself or the other individual outdoors, which is the safest option, or at very least into a well-ventilated area. As soon as you're breathing fresh air, call local emergency response services.

How does carbon monoxide poisoning work?

Carbon monoxide poisoning works by preventing vital oxygen from entering your bloodstream. Hemoglobin – the iron-rich protein that gives blood its red color – is normally responsible for carrying oxygen



from the lungs to the rest of the body's cells; oxygen bonds to the hemoglobin, and is then transported via the bloodstream. However, when one breathes carbon monoxide, the CO begins bonding to hemoglobin instead of much needed oxygen, and proceeds to form a toxin called Carboxyhemoglobin, which causes the physical symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.

How can carbon monoxide detectors protect me?

Carbon monoxide detectors protect us by sensing what our eyes and noses can't. Because CO is undetectable to the human senses, people are generally never aware of its presence until it's too late, and carbon monoxide poisoning has already taken hold in their bodies. In many tragic cases, people have been asleep during the onset of symptoms, and actually died without ever having known they were in danger. Instances like these are what have made carbon monoxide alarms the difference between life and death. By detecting the presence of CO in a living space and sounding an alarm that's loud enough to wake even the soundly asleep, carbon monoxide detectors provide us with the chance to escape safely, with our lives and health intact.

Where in my home should I install carbon monoxide alarms?

Because sleep inhibits one's awareness of carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms, the most critical places to install carbon monoxide alarms are in and near each sleeping area in your home- as a matter of fact, many states have mandated that a carbon monoxide detector be placed in each bedroom. If your home has more than one level, be sure that each story is equipped

with at least one carbon monoxide detector. It's also recommended that an extra CO detector be placed in the vicinity of any heat source that burns fuel (such as a fireplace, gas stove/oven, water heater, furnace), but no closer than 15-20 feet, since too-near proximity can lead to false alarms. Keep in mind that cooking appliances and bathrooms – which generate steam – can also trigger false CO readings, so carbon monoxide detectors should be installed at least 10 feet away from them.

What should I do if my carbon monoxide alarm ever goes off?

In the event that your carbon monoxide alarm ever sounds, immediately evacuate all members of your household outdoors into fresh air, then dial emergency services. Because they're able to safely enter homes wearing protective gas masks, members of the local fire department typically respond to carbon monoxide related emergencies. The fire personnel will use highly sensitive, handheld CO detection units to obtain an accurate reading of the carbon monoxide levels in your home, and will then advise you in the safest course of action to follow.

How long does a carbon monoxide detector last for?

Generally speaking, carbon monoxide detectors are good for 5 years of use (that's the length of time that most manufacturers warranty them for), and we suggest that you change them at regular 5-year intervals to ensure that you're well protected. In between unit replacements, it's recommended that you keep CO alarms at their best by testing them monthly (if you suspect that they're not working properly, replace immediately), and changing their batteries on a yearly basis.