



Is your home safe for the heating season?

Don't wait until the temperature drops. **Take action now** to ensure your home is safe from carbon monoxide (CO) before the heating season begins.

Why should I care about CO?

Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odourless, tasteless and poisonous gas. Exposure to high levels can kill in just minutes or a few hours. It can be produced when you use your furnace, fireplace, or any other fuel-burning appliance. Poor maintenance, damaged or blocked venting, improper use of appliances, or inadequate air flow can cause dangerous levels of CO to build up inside your home.

Fireplaces need your attention too!

When we think of heating systems, fireplaces aren't usually the first thing that comes to mind, but they too, along with your chimney, need to be inspected and maintained on an annual basis by a certified technician.

How do I avoid high levels of CO exposure in my home?

- **Inspect and maintain your furnace and fireplace:** Eliminate build-up of CO at the source. Schedule an annual inspection of your fuel-burning appliance with a TSSA-registered heating technician.
- **Keep all outside vents clear of blockage:** Ensure all outside gas appliance vents are not blocked by snow, ice or any other objects. This will avoid CO being drawn back inside your house.

- **Let your house breathe:** If your house is too airtight, CO may be produced, as your fuel-burning appliances need enough fresh air to completely burn their fuel. In addition, powerful exhaust fans in bathrooms and kitchens can actually create a negative pressure inside your home, resulting in backdraft which may draw exhaust fumes from your furnace, hot water heater or other appliances back into the home. If your home is tightly sealed to make it energy efficient, consider getting a professionally installed air exchanger or a heating system with a direct feed of air to avoid potential CO hazards.

How can I be warned of CO exposure in my home?

- **Install approved CO detectors.** They will warn you of rising levels of CO, giving you and your family time to exit the home. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on where to install the detectors in your home and be sure to check the average life expectancy of the detector. Test the units once a month.
- **Know the symptoms of CO poisoning.** They are similar to the flu - nausea, headache, burning eyes, confusion and drowsiness - except there is no fever. If you experience any of these symptoms, take everyone outside to fresh air and call 911 or the local fire department.

Is your home heated by a natural gas boiler?

A natural gas atmospheric boiler should be checked annually by a certified technician to ensure it is operating safely.

All fuel contractors must be registered with TSSA. To confirm, please call 1-877-682-8772. For more home safety tips, check out www.safetyinfo.ca.

Kitchener Utilities Inspections, Service and Repairs call **519-741-2529**, select option #2. For Natural Gas Emergencies call **519-741-2541**.



Connect with Kitchener

