



What to Do If Your Carbon Monoxide Detector Goes Off

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Most of the time when an alarm goes off in our lives it's a drill or a fluke. We've become desensitized to them and don't have the sense of urgency alarms are supposed to instill in us. But when your carbon monoxide alarm goes off, don't ignore it.

Carbon Monoxide alarms are alerting you to a very high level of a deadly gas you can't see or smell. When Carbon Monoxide builds up in a space, it replaces Oxygen and can cause you to pass out. Prolonged exposure can cause brain damage and death. For your safety, follow these steps.

- 1. Get to fresh air**

The safest place to be when your CO alarm is sounding is outdoors. Get outside if you can. If you can't leave the building for some reason, open as many windows and doors as possible. The fresh air will dilute the Carbon Monoxide.

- 2. Don't assume the problem is passed if the alarm quits sounding**

Once fresh air dilutes the Carbon Monoxide, the alarm might go silent. That doesn't mean you're safe. The source of the CO is likely still filling your space with the dangerous gas. The levels will temporarily fall when you introduce fresh air and allow the CO to escape but it can build up again.

- 3. Call for help**

Call 911 when your CO detector goes off. Emergency responders are trained to identify and treat the symptoms of CO poisoning. Firefighters are also equipped to find the source of Carbon Monoxide leaks and to stop them.

- 4. Really, don't be afraid to call 911**

You might feel silly calling 911 when an alarm goes off and you don't see any evidence of an eminent threat to you, your family or your home. But CO is a fatal gas. Unintentional and non-fire-related CO poisoning kills about 170 people every year in the United States, according to information from the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Beyond the dangers of the gas, small hard-to-detect fires are often the source of Carbon Monoxide build-up. Calling for emergency help could prevent a major fire in your home. You can also contact your local utility provider.