



Advice for Students

Students can be particularly at risk of Carbon Monoxide poisoning. For many it will be the first time they have been responsible for their own housing, so it's important for students to be aware of the risk and how to protect themselves. Plus, less than a quarter of students told the campaign that they have an audible alarm in their accommodation.

Carbon Monoxide is a highly poisonous gas that has no colour, taste or smell. It can be produced by any appliances burning gas, wood, oil or coal, if they are not properly installed and maintained.

When you inhale Carbon Monoxide it starves your body of oxygen. Even low level exposure over a long period can cause lasting damage to your health, including permanent brain damage. More serious cases can cause death.

To protect yourself:

1. Whether you are living with your parents or in a rented house, check that your accommodation has an audible Carbon Monoxide alarm. If not, your landlord may provide one or you can buy one yourself from DIY stores, supermarkets and energy suppliers from as little as £20. 'Black Spot' indicators are not recommended as these are often inaccurate and will not alert you if you're asleep.
2. Ask your landlord for an up-to-date gas safety certificate for the property – your landlord should make sure all fuel-burning appliances are safety checked and serviced annually by a qualified and registered engineer with the appropriate organisation: Gas Safe Register (gas) www.gassaferegister.co.uk, HETAS (solid fuel) www.hetas.co.uk or OFTEC (oil) www.oftec.co.uk.
3. Know the symptoms and how to take action if you think you may have been poisoned.

The six main symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning are headaches, dizziness, nausea, breathlessness, collapse and loss of consciousness. These symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning are similar to those of flu (and hangovers!) but other warning signs that could suggest Carbon Monoxide poisoning include:

- other people in your house, flat or University building having similar symptoms;
- symptoms disappear when you leave the building or go away on holiday and return when you come back;
- symptoms tend to be seasonal – e.g. headaches during the winter when the central heating is used more often.

Other danger signs include:

- sooting or staining on or around your appliance;
- excessive condensation in the room where the appliance is installed;
- lazy yellow/orange coloured gas flames rather than a sharp blue one.

If you have spotted signs of a Carbon Monoxide leak or are experiencing symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning:

- Open doors or windows for ventilation.
- Call the relevant emergency advice line: Gas Emergency Service (24 hours) **0800 111 999**; Solid Fuel Advice Line **0845 601 4406**; Oil (OFTEC) **0845 658 5080**.
- Go to your GP or nearest A & E department, call NHS Direct on 0845 4647 (NHS 24 in Scotland on **08454 242424**) or, if it is urgent, call 999 for an ambulance.
- Have all appliances serviced and checked. Do not use them until you're told it's safe to do so.

**For more information and advice on how to stay safe visit:
www.co-bealarmed.co.uk**

Carbon Monoxide – Be Alarmed! is the national campaign to reduce the number of deaths and injuries caused by Carbon Monoxide. The campaign is run by Energy UK on behalf of Britain's six major gas and electricity companies in partnership with the Dominic Rogers Trust, and is supported by more than 40 other organisations.