



# THE DANGERS OF CARBON MONOXIDE



PH Jones Carbon Monoxide Information Leaflet

## About this booklet

This booklet is intended to provide information about the dangers of Carbon Monoxide (CO) and should be used as a guide only.

Whilst we make every effort to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information contained in this booklet, PH Jones will not be in any way responsible for any loss, however arising, from the use of, or reliance on this information.

For more information about Gas Safety, please contact your landlord or call the HSE Gas Safety Advice Line on freephone 0800 300 363, or visit [www.hse.gov.uk/GAS/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/GAS/)

For technical information, please obtain further expert advice.

## Contact Us

If you have any questions relating to the information contained within this leaflet, or to request additional copies, please contact the PH Jones Communications Team:

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PH Jones Registered Office: Aqua House, Hampton Heath Industrial Estate, Malpas, Cheshire, SY14 8LY

# The dangers of Carbon Monoxide

## What is it?

Carbon monoxide, or CO as it is also known, is a poisonous gas produced by incomplete burning of carbon-based fuels, including gas, oil, wood, and coal. So if your fuel doesn't burn properly, carbon monoxide could be produced.

## What does carbon monoxide do?

Carbon monoxide kills.

When carbon monoxide enters the body, it prevents the blood from bringing oxygen to cells, tissues, and organs.

When high levels of CO are present, they can kill quickly. When lower levels of CO are present over a long period of time and they are inhaled, this can cause serious harm to health.

In extreme cases paralysis and brain damage can be caused as a result of prolonged exposure to carbon monoxide.

**Carbon monoxide poisoning is known as “the silent killer” because you cannot hear it, see it, taste it, or smell it.**

## What are the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning?

It is important to recognise the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.

The symptoms to look out for are non-specific, and similar to those of viral cold and flu infections, or even food poisoning, including headache, nausea, abdominal pain, dizziness, sore throat, dry cough.

With children, the symptoms are similar to those of a stomach upset, with nausea and vomiting.

Other symptoms may include confusion, loss of memory and problems with coordination.

In severe cases, symptoms include a fast and irregular heart rate, hyperventilation, confusion, drowsiness and difficulty breathing. Seizures and loss of consciousness may also occur.

The symptoms can occur a few days or even months after exposure to carbon monoxide.

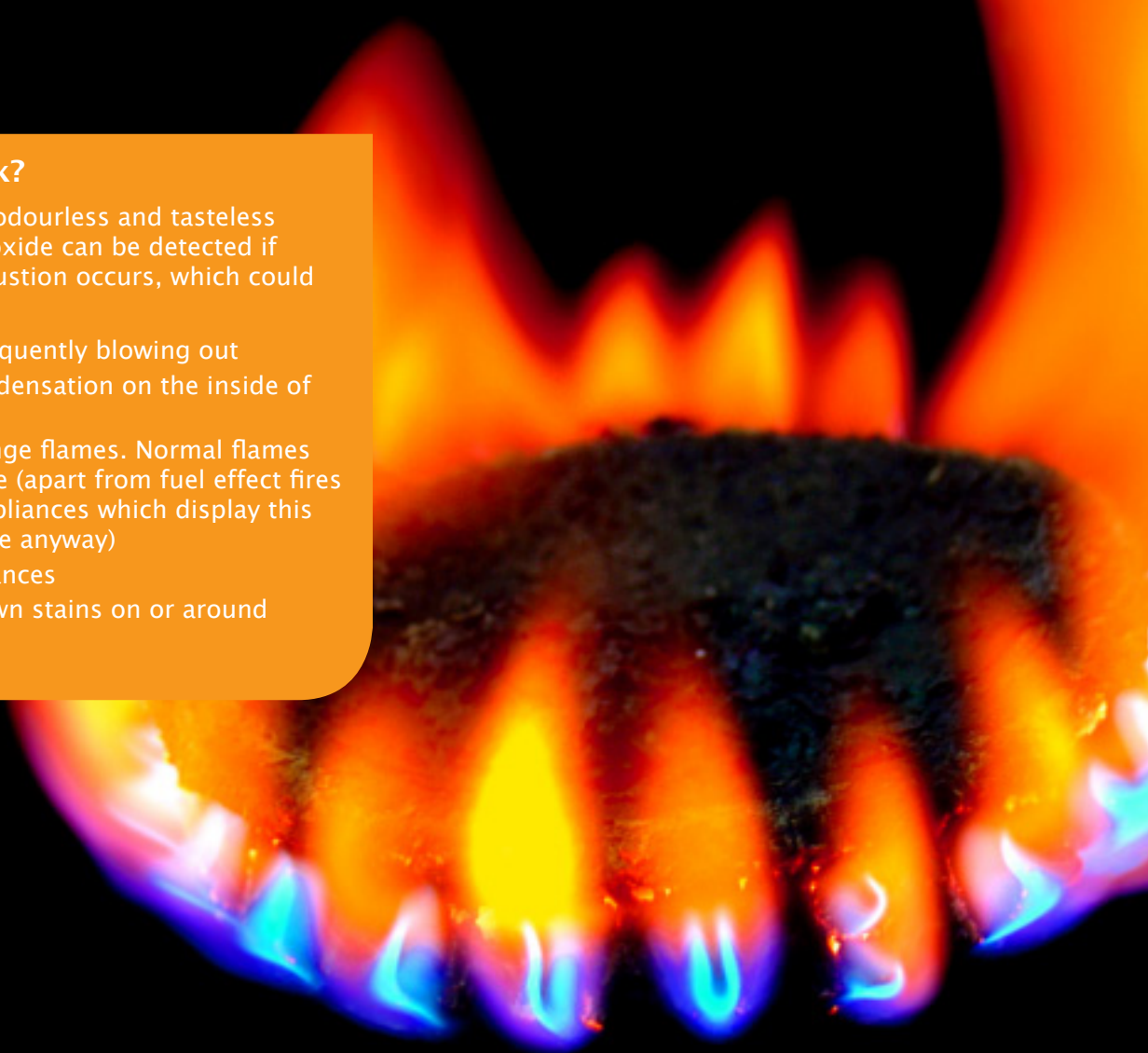
If you have any health concerns or think you may be suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning, you should consult your GP for diagnosis and treatment.



## Are you at risk?

Although it is an odourless and tasteless gas, carbon monoxide can be detected if incomplete combustion occurs, which could result in:

- Pilot lights frequently blowing out
- Increased condensation on the inside of your windows
- Yellow or orange flames. Normal flames should be blue (apart from fuel effect fires or flueless appliances which display this colour of flame anyway)
- Soot on appliances
- Yellow or brown stains on or around appliances.



## How to prevent exposure to carbon monoxide

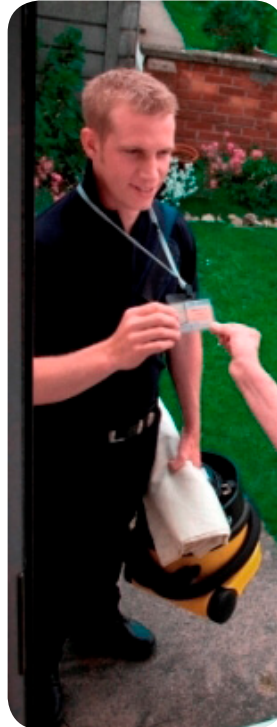
Being aware of and knowing how to prevent the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning could significantly reduce the associated risks.

### Gas safety checks

Making sure your gas appliances are serviced every year is the most effective way of ensuring that your system is working correctly.

Both private and Registered Social Landlords have a legal duty to carry out an annual gas safety check and maintain all gas appliances within your property.

Your landlord must provide you with a copy of the completed gas safety check certificate (known as a CP12).



By law, any gas work carried out in your home must be undertaken by a qualified Gas Safe Registered engineer.



It is extremely important to keep your annual gas safety check appointment and to allow PH Jones engineers into your home to carry out this work.

All PH Jones gas engineers are Gas Safe registered and qualified for the work they undertake.

We instruct our workforce to provide their identification and proof of registration when they arrive at your home to service and maintain gas appliances.

## If you notice a hazardous appliance

- Open all doors and windows to ventilate the room – do not allow anyone to sleep in it
- Switch off the appliance and do not use until it has been checked and declared safe by a Gas Safe Registered engineer
- If you can locate it, shut off the gas supply at the meter control valve
- If you believe that gas is continuing to escape, call the Gas Emergency Freephone Number: 0800 111 999
- Visit your GP urgently and state that you believe your symptoms may be related to carbon monoxide poisoning. You can request either a blood and/or breath sample. However, be aware that carbon monoxide leaves the blood quickly and tests taken more than four hours after exposure may be inaccurate
- Contact a Gas Safe Registered engineer to check and if necessary repair the appliance.

## Other measures

- Install a carbon monoxide alarm, fitted at a high level in the home. CO alarms will trigger a loud alarm noise upon detection of the gas
- Ventilation is essential for rooms which have gas appliances. Make sure there is always good air circulation, for example vents should never be covered and chimneys or flues should never be blocked
- If you have a chimney, ask your landlord about ensuring it is swept adequately every year
- If you have appliances that run on other fossil fuels other than gas, ensure they are serviced and maintained by an appropriately qualified engineer.



According to a 2008 CORGI report, the main cause of carbon monoxide fatalities is linked to lack of servicing and maintenance of gas appliances, in particular gas boilers and gas fires. Bad installation and poor repair of gas appliances were the next two highest causes of carbon monoxide incidents.

Contact your landlord or local  
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