

# PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY FROM CARBON MONOXIDE



## CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING (COP) IN KANSAS<sup>1</sup>

January is the deadliest month for accidental COP. In the first two years of carbon monoxide surveillance, over 25% of accidental COP deaths occurred in January (8/29). About 31% of suspected accidental COP reports occurred during the winter months of December–February (83/266).

### Carbon Monoxide Poisoning by Season in Kansas



31.3%  
Winter



23.8%  
Spring

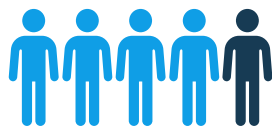


21.1%  
Summer



23.8%  
Fall

Improperly maintained furnaces and running gas-powered engines, including space heaters, in enclosed spaces are important sources of exposure to dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. During the first two years of surveillance, at least 34 Kansans were reported to have suspected COP from a fuel-burning appliance (furnace or fixed stove) and at least 11 Kansans experienced COP from running a car, mower, or diesel heater in their garage.



**Nearly 4 out of 5 reported accidental COPs occur home, in garages, or other structures on their properties (211/266).** About 14% of COPs reported occurred in public locations other than

private homes such as non-recreational outdoor areas, nursing homes, and restaurants. The most common public location for COP was on a roadway or parking lot (12/37). Many of these were due to car accidents and fires.

## PREVENTION



Install working carbon monoxide detectors in your home. Detectors can be purchased at hardware stores or online for \$20-30. Detectors should have battery back-up in case power is lost.



Never leave a car running inside an enclosed space. Leaving your car idling in your garage to warm it up when it's cold outside can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning, even if a door is kept open to increase ventilation.



If you are experiencing symptoms consistent with carbon monoxide exposure or your carbon monoxide detector goes off, seek fresh air immediately. Call 911 and wait until the building is declared safe to enter.

## WHAT IS CARBON MONOXIDE?

Carbon Monoxide is an odorless, colorless, tasteless gas. It is produced when carbon-based fuel is burned, such as gas in a car or kerosene in a heater. Carbon monoxide can build up if there is not proper ventilation and cause harm to people and animals.

## KNOW THE SIGNS

Carbon monoxide cannot be smelled, tasted, or seen. If levels of carbon monoxide are high enough, death can occur within minutes. Look out for these symptoms:



Headache



Nausea



Tiredness



Dizziness



Confusion



Shortness of Breath



Never run a grill (gas or charcoal) or gas, kerosene, or propane heater inside your home. Do not use a gas-powered stove to heat your home.



Have your furnace or wood-burning stove inspected by a professional annually.



Always run generators outside and at least 20 feet from your home or where people will be.

<sup>1</sup>Suspected carbon monoxide poisoning (COP) became a reportable condition in Kansas on May 11, 2018. This fact sheet summarizes data from the first two years of COP surveillance in Kansas (May 11, 2018 to May 10, 2020). Data include reported cases of suspected COP from mandatory reporters, death records where COP is listed as a cause, and Kansas Poison Control Center reports of COP (beginning October 2019). Data are limited to Kansas residents."