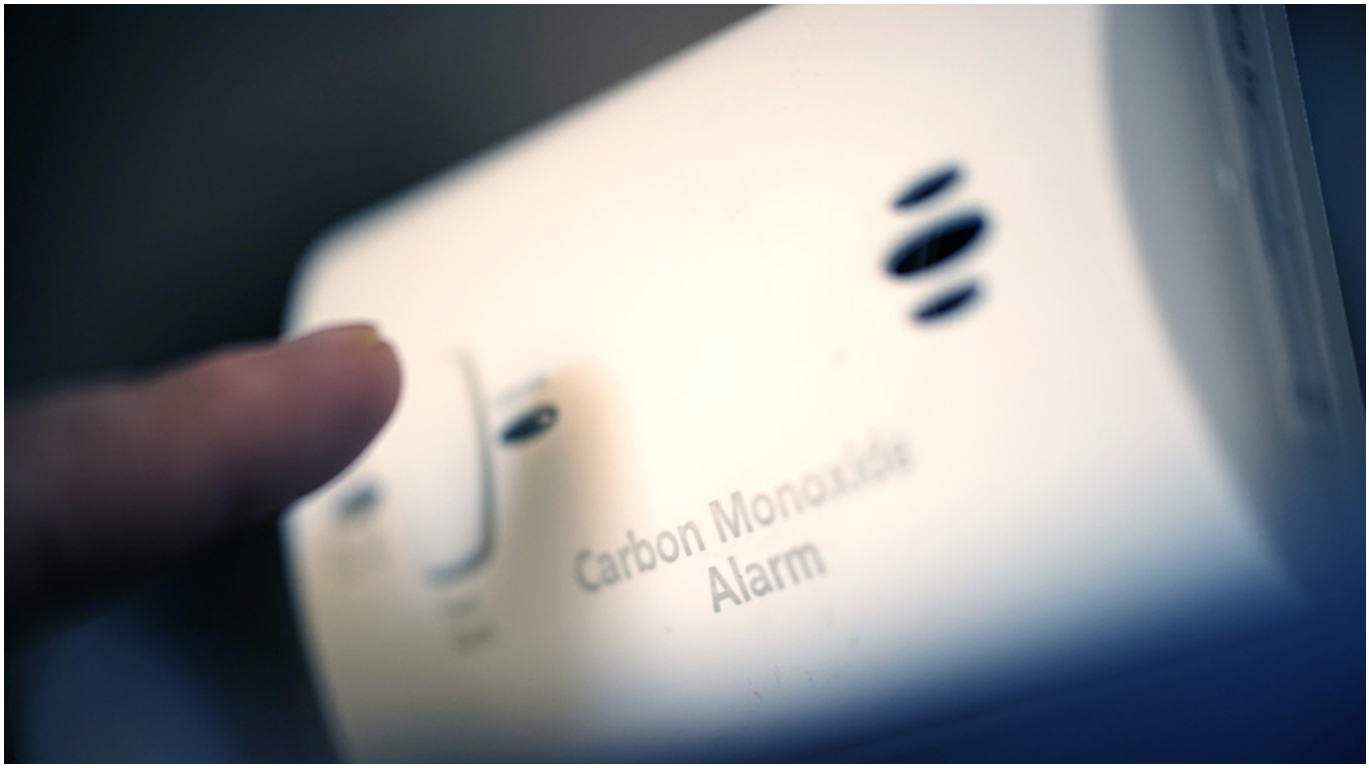
4 steps to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.



Carbon monoxide: You can't see it, you can't smell it … so how can you keep your loved ones safe from it? Carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless chemical. Carbon monoxide poisoning is a serious matter that accounts for over 15,000 emergency room visits in the United States annually.

Without a detection system, you might never know it's in the air or your home until it's too late. Fortunately, installing a carbon monoxide detector and knowing what to do if it goes off can save lives.

Here are four tips to help prevent carbon monoxide poisoning in your home:

1. **Get your appliances checked.** Any fuel-burning products in your home like space heaters, fireplaces, water heaters and gas stovetops emit carbon monoxide. Set up a maintenance schedule with a professional to check these appliances at least once a year to ensure everything is in working order.

2. **Keep your generators outside.** Never run a generator in a basement or garage during a power outage. Make sure the generator is at least 20 feet away from a window, door or vent.

3. **Use carbon monoxide detectors.** As hard as you try to prevent carbon monoxide from leaking into your home, leaks can occur. If a leak happens, carbon monoxide detectors can save lives. Purchase carbon monoxide detectors from a local hardware store and install one on every level of your home. (The installation can be as easy as simply plugging it into a power source.) Check your

carbon monoxide detectors once a year to make sure each unit is functioning correctly.

4. **Know what to do in case of an emergency.** If carbon monoxide is detected in your home, knowing what to do in the first few minutes is crucial. First, you should get your family out of the house as quickly as possible. If you are unable to get outside, open all your windows to get fresh air flowing. Next, call 911 or the fire department. A professional should search your home and locate the site of the leak. If you are experiencing any symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning such as headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain or confusion, seek medical attention immediately.

Whether you're a renter or homeowner, knowing your home is safe is priceless. These safety tips can help provide peace of mind – and, the right insurance coverage can too. To better protect your home and loved ones, talk with a local, independent agent about home insurance.