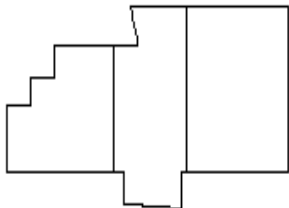


# Air Quality Tips



## Akron Regional Air Quality Management District

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146 S. High Street  
Suite 904  
Akron, OH 44308

330/ 375-2480  
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330/ 375-2402

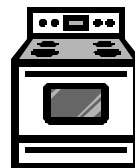


# Carbon Monoxide (CO) Safety

Winter in Northeast Ohio means staying indoors to escape the bitter cold and wind. The promise of colder weather may be right around the corner, right now, or months away, but now is a great time to think about protecting your loved-ones from the danger of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

Carbon monoxide (CO), a colorless and odorless gas, is produced from the incomplete combustion of fuels like gas, wood, kerosene or oil. What things in your home burn these fuels?

- Space heater
- Water Heater
- Fireplace (wood burning or gas)
- Automobiles
- Furnace
- Stove/Oven



Properly used and maintained, these items usually produce very small amounts of CO. **BUT**, poorly maintained or incorrectly used, the above items can produce enough CO to be dangerous.

### ***To prevent high levels of carbon monoxide, review and practice the following:***

- Have all fuel burning appliances, including oil and gas furnaces, water heaters, and stoves inspected by a trained professional at the beginning of each heating season.
- Ensure chimneys and flues are connected, maintained and free of obstructions.
- When buying appliances, choose those that vent their fumes to the outside air.
- Never use a gas oven to heat your home.
- Do not idle your car in the garage, even if the garage door is open
- Do not sleep in a room with an un-vented gas or kerosene space heater. Consider using an electric space heater if appropriate.
- Consider buying and installing a carbon monoxide detector, but don't use it as a substitute for good appliance maintenance.

ARAQMD's air monitoring staff can investigate if you think you may have a CO problem, but they cannot respond to emergencies. If you think CO levels in your home may be dangerous, **leave immediately** and call your local fire department or other appropriate safety forces.

### **Health Risks of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**

Being exposed to CO can produce a number of negative health effects including:

- Severe headaches
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Mental confusion
- Faintness
- **Even DEATH**

If you think you may have carbon monoxide poisoning, consult a medical professional immediately! Additionally, have the source identified and repaired before returning to the environment.

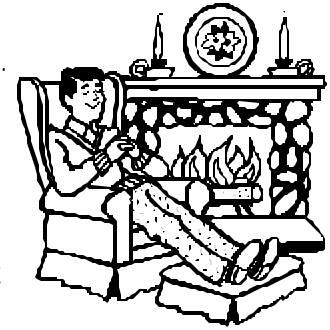
If you would like more information or publications on indoor air safety, call the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Indoor Air Quality Information Clearinghouse at 1-800-438-4318, or log onto their website at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq>.

# Fireplaces:

## Warm Your Heart *and* Breathe Easy

.....

Cozy slippers, hot chocolate, a good book, and an hour to relax seem to go perfectly with fireplaces. But, an open fireplace or woodstove can be a source of air pollution, both inside and outside. Like any other combustion source, burning wood produces carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide, as well as breathable particles (particulate matter). It can also trigger asthmatic attacks much like tobacco smoke can. Risks associated with fireplaces or woodstoves can be greatly reduced by following a few simple precautions.

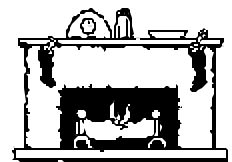


- **Maintain your chimney.** Creosote, a black tar-like substance, can build up inside a chimney, causing a downdraft and a smoky room or a potential hazard. Have your chimney inspected annually and if necessary, cleaned and repaired.
- **Install a carbon monoxide detector**, especially if you have a wood heat source, or an old and un-vented gas or oil fired appliance.
- **Build small, hot fires** instead of large smoky ones.
- **Use seasoned woods**—woods that have been stored and dried for at least six months. Hardwoods, (maple, oak, elm) make better, longer-lasting fires. If you use artificial logs, use only one at a time because they burn fast, and more than one may get out of hand.
- **Provide additional ventilation.** Open a nearby window an inch or two if weather permits.
- **Make sure your woodstove is EPA certified.** Since 1990, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has required all new wood burning stoves to use “clean-burn” technology that can reduce wood smoke emissions by as much as 90%.
- **Upgrade your home insulation** and/or install a fireplace insert (to cut down on heat waste). Your fireplace is a net-energy loser, because it will pump your furnace-heated air right out of your house. So, if you use it frequently, consider insulating as a way to cut down on your heating bills.
- **Correct installation.** Make sure your wood stove is installed correctly.
- **Don't burn** colored paper, plastics, Christmas trees, treated lumber, painted items, finished items, or manufactured wood products (plywood or particle board). These can create dangerous fumes.
- **ALWAYS use a firescreen!**

*Adapted from UC Berkeley Wellness Newsletter, 12-96.*



*Be careful and cautious when using fireplaces and wood burning stoves.  
If you have a doubt about safety, check it out first!*



**For more information about indoor and/or outdoor air quality contact:**

**Akron Regional Air Quality Management District (ARAQMD)**

**330/ 375-2480**

**or**

**1-800-589-2480**