

PROPER RESPONSE TO CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM SIGNAL

WHAT IS CARBON MONOXIDE?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a highly toxic, invisible, odorless, tasteless gas.

HOW DOES CO POISON PEOPLE?

The human body depends on oxygen for the burning of fuel (food) to provide us with the energy that allows our cells to live and function. Oxygen makes up approximately 21% of the atmosphere and enters our lungs when we breathe. In our lungs the oxygen combines with the hemoglobin in the blood (oxyhemoglobin) and is carried in the blood stream throughout the body where it releases oxygen to the cells.

Carbon monoxide is dangerous because it bonds more tightly to the hemoglobin (COHb, carboxyhemoglobin) than oxygen does. When CO combines with hemoglobin, the hemoglobin's ability to combine with oxygen is lost. As the COHb concentration rises, people become nauseous, unconscious and ultimately die (see below).

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING?

Many people often confuse carbon monoxide poisoning with the flu; the initial symptoms being very similar. Different concentrations of CO over various lengths of time cause different symptoms.

Many cases of carbon monoxide poisoning indicate that while the victims were aware that they were not well, they were too disoriented to save themselves by either calling for assistance or exiting the building. Also, due to size, small children and pets are generally the first affected.

The following are the symptoms related to carbon monoxide poisoning. Discuss them with all members of the household:

MILD EXPOSURE:	Headaches, running nose, sore eyes, often described as "flu-like" symptoms
MEDIUM EXPOSURE:	Dizziness, drowsiness, vomiting
EXTREME EXPOSURE:	Unconsciousness, brain damage, death

WHAT TO DO WHEN ALARM SIGNAL SOUNDS?

If the Red LED flashes and alarm sounds 4 short beeps every 6 seconds:

- 1) Press the reset/mute button to temporarily silence alarm;
- 2) Immediately move to fresh air, either outdoors or by an open door or window. Check that all persons are accounted for. Do not re-enter the premises or move away from the open door/window until the emergency service responders have arrived, the premises have been aired out, and your alarm remains in its normal condition (Green LED blinks, no audible alarm signal);
- 3) Call your emergency services, fire department, or 911.
- 4) After following steps 1- 3, if your alarm reactivates within a 24 hour period, repeat steps 1-3 and, if you haven't already, immediately call a qualified appliance technician (or have your landlord do so). The technician should investigate for sources of CO from fuel burning equipment and appliances, and inspect for proper operation of this equipment. If problems are identified during this inspection, have the equipment serviced immediately. Note any combustion equipment not inspected by the technician and consult the manufacturers' instructions, or contact the manufacturers directly, for more information about CO safety and this equipment. Make sure that motor vehicles are not, and have not been, operating in an attached garage or adjacent to the residence.

WHAT TO DO IF DETECTOR MALFUNCTIONS?

If the Red LED flashes and alarm sounds 2 short beeps every minute, the detector is malfunctioning. Please review warranty for instructions and call manufacturer to receive new replacement unit.