

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Carbon monoxide poisoning can be fatal and concerns everyone: you can reduce the risks by adopting the right practices.**

As the temperature drops, the risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning increases, linked to the use of heating appliances. Such accidents can also be caused by the use of electricity generators.

Every year, France sees around 1300 episodes of CO poisoning, involving almost 3000 people. Invisible, odourless and non-irritating, carbon monoxide is undetectable. However, some simple practices can help reduce the risks. Particular attention should be paid to using mobile fuel-burning space heaters properly, and avoiding makeshift heating systems, which are particularly risky.

#### **Adopt the right practices to limit the risks of poisoning**

Appliances that burn fuels (such as natural gas, wood, coal, fuel oil, butane, propane, petrol or other petroleum-based fuels) to produce heat or light are all liable to produce carbon monoxide (CO) if used under suboptimal operating conditions.

##### **For your home**

- Have your heating and hot water installations (such as boilers) in your main or secondary residence systematically checked and serviced by a qualified professional at least once a year, before winter and without fail before switching them on again. This also applies to the flues of chimneys and stoves (mechanical chimney sweeping);
- Air your home for at least 10 minutes a day, even during cold weather;
- Keep your ventilation systems in good working order and never block air inlets and outlets;

### **For mobile appliances**

- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when using fuel-burning appliances: use only the recommended fuel, never run space heaters continuously;
- Electricity generators and braziers **should never be used inside homes, garages, attics, cellars, etc.**
- Barbecues or any other cooking appliances must not be used for heating inside a home.

## **Identifying symptoms**

Carbon monoxide is a gas that cannot be detected by our senses because it is odourless, colourless and non-irritating. This makes it essential to look out for the symptoms.

**In the event of poisoning, headaches, tiredness, nausea and dizziness appear with varying degrees of rapidity, and can affect several people in the same household if fuel-burning appliances are present. Serious poisoning can lead to coma and death, sometimes within just a few minutes. So prompt action is essential:**

- **Ventilate the room immediately;**
- **Switch off the fuel-burning appliances if possible;**
- **Evacuate the premises;**
- **And call the emergency services on 15, 18 or 112 (and 114 for the hearing impaired) or a poison control centre (24/7 emergency number):**
  - **ANGERS: +33 (0)2 41 48 21 21**
  - **BORDEAUX: +33 (0)5 56 96 40 80**
  - **LILLE: +33 (0)8 00 59 59 59**
  - **LYON: +33 (0)4 72 11 69 11**
  - **MARSEILLE: +33 (0)4 91 75 25 25**
  - **NANCY: +33 (0)3 83 22 50 50**
  - **PARIS: +33 (0)1 40 05 48 48**
  - **TOULOUSE: +33 (0)5 61 77 74 47**

Poisoning victims must be treated quickly, as soon as the first symptoms appear, and may need to be hospitalised.

### **A brochure with information on prevention**

The leaflet "[Protecting yourself from carbon monoxide poisoning](#)" explains the dangers of this gas and the appliances and installations liable to emit CO, and gives effective advice on how to avoid poisoning.

### **Find out more:**

[Ministry of Health & Prevention](#)

- [Santé Publique France information resources](#)

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