

Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarm Response Plan for On-Campus Apartments

Any time that your CO detector sounds an alarm, the situation requires an immediate response. Remember that an alarm indicates elevated levels of CO in your apartment. CO is called the "silent killer" because it cannot be seen or smelled. Some people can be exposed to dangerous levels of CO and not feel any symptoms. Regardless of whether you feel symptoms, never ignore the alarm.

What do I do if my CO alarm sounds?

- Open windows and doors to air out your apartment.
- Call Campus Safety at 3-3333. Campus Safety will have either a Calvin College mechanical systems technician or the Grand Rapids Fire Department come to your apartment.
- Leave your apartment and move to fresh air.
- Check to make sure that everyone in your apartment is accounted for.
- Do not re-enter the apartment until help has arrived, the apartment has been sufficiently aired out, and your CO alarm remains in its normal condition.

Understanding the alarm light and horn patterns:

Condition	Horn	Lights	Test/reset Button
CO is detected	Horn sounds 4 short tones then pauses, every 5 seconds	RED light flashes 4 times right after horn	Quick press activates CO Reset
Smoke is detected	Horn sounds 3 long tones then pauses, every 4 seconds	Both RED lights flash with horn	Quick press activates False Alarm control
Low Battery	Horn beeps once per minute	YELLOW light flashes 2 times per minute after horn beeps	Quick press will eliminate the low-battery warning for about 10 hours
Detector not functioning and must be replaced	Horn beeps twice a minute	YELLOW light flashes	Press the button to allow the alarm to reset and self test. If the fault signal continues, request a new detector

What is carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide, known by the chemical formula "CO", is a poisonous gas that kills approximately 534 people in the United States alone every year. Of that number, about 207 people were killed by carbon monoxide emitted from a consumer product, like a stove or water heater. You can't hear, taste, see or smell it. It's nicknamed the "silent killer" because it sneaks up on its victims and can take lives without warning.

What are the sources of CO?

CO is a by-product of incomplete combustion. CO sources can include malfunctioning appliances -- including furnaces, stoves, ovens and water heaters -- that operate by burning fossil fuels such as natural or liquefied petroleum (LP). When malfunctioning appliances aren't adequately ventilated, the amount of CO in the air may rise to a level that can cause illness or even death.

Other CO sources include vehicle exhaust, blocked chimney flues, fuel-burning cooking appliances used for heating purposes, and charcoal grills used in the home, tent, camper, garage or other unventilated areas.

How does CO affect the human body?

When victims inhale CO, the toxic gas enters the bloodstream and replaces the oxygen molecules found on the critical blood component, hemoglobin, depriving the heart and brain of the oxygen necessary to function.

The following symptoms are related to carbon monoxide poisoning and should be discussed with all members of the household:

Mild exposure: Often described as flu-like symptoms, including slight headache, nausea, vomiting, fatigue.

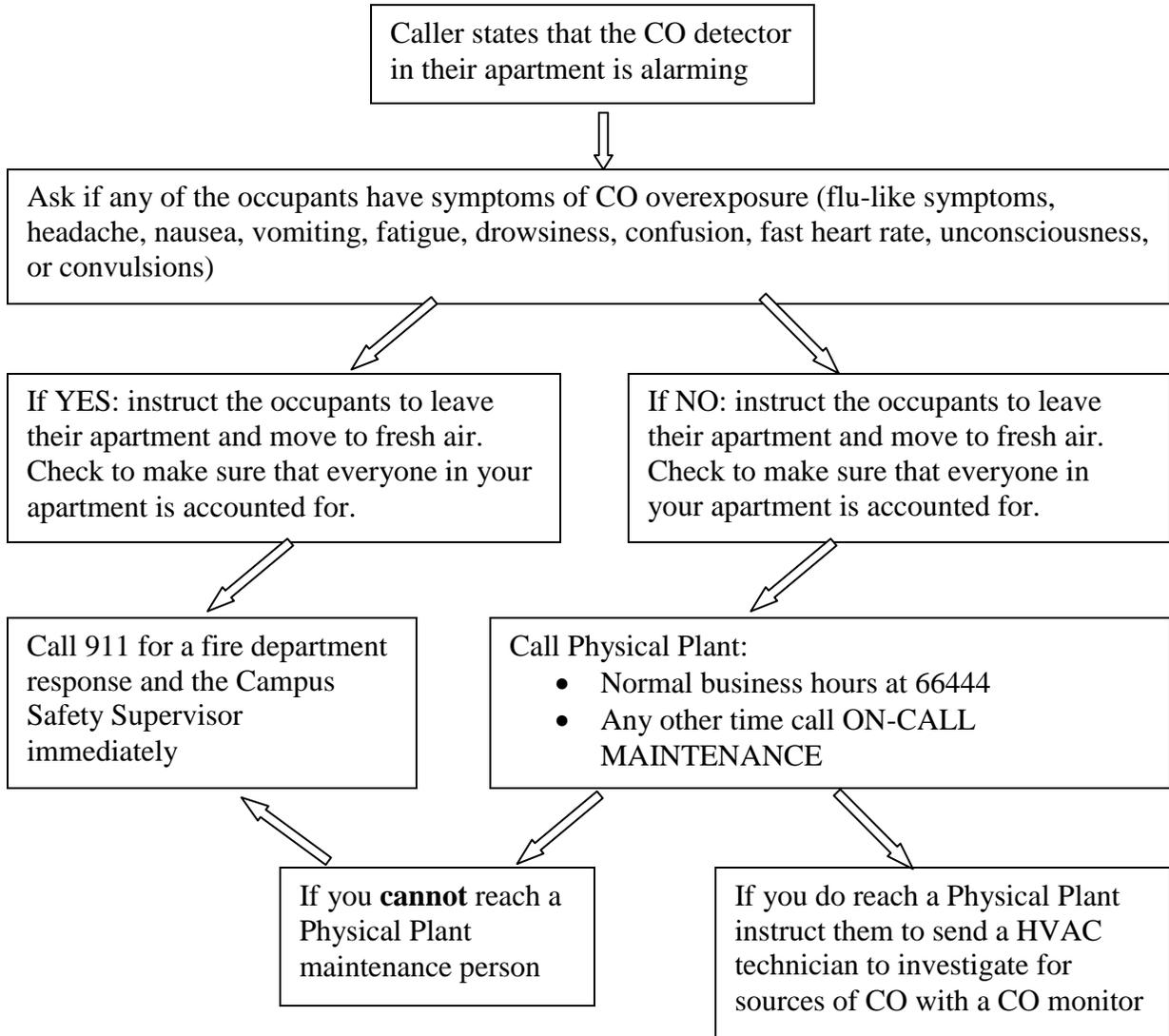
Medium exposure: Severe throbbing headache, drowsiness, confusion, fast heart rate.

Extreme exposure: Unconsciousness, convulsions, cardiorespiratory failure, death.

Many cases of reported carbon monoxide poisoning indicate that while victims are aware they are not well, they become so disoriented, that they are unable to save themselves by either exiting the building or calling for assistance. Young children and household pets are typically the first affected.

Carbon monoxide alarms are intended to alarm at carbon monoxide levels below those that cause a loss of ability to react to the danger of carbon monoxide exposures.

Campus Safety Dispatch Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarm Response Plan



Record the following information: Dispatcher name _____ Date _____

Name of caller _____ Location of alarm _____

Time _____ Number called from _____

Injuries _____

Campus Safety Supervisor called _____ Time _____ Response _____

Physical Plant personnel called _____ Time _____ Response _____

911 called _____ Time _____ Response _____