

# Carbon monoxide safety

for holiday caravan owners and residential park homeowners



## What is carbon monoxide poisoning?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas produced when fuels such as gas, oil or wood do not burn properly. You cannot see, smell or taste it.

Breathing in carbon monoxide, even in small amounts, can make you seriously ill and can be fatal. Symptoms can feel like flu and may include:

- **headaches**
- **dizziness**
- **nausea**
- **breathlessness**
- **confusion**
- **collapse or loss of consciousness.**

Children, older people and those with existing health conditions may be more vulnerable to the effects of carbon monoxide.

As the symptoms can often be mistaken for something else, carbon monoxide poisoning can go unnoticed. The only sure means of diagnosis is a blood test.

## Staying safe

It is essential that you take simple steps to protect yourself and others:

- learn the warning signs of unsafe appliances
- never block ventilation openings
- fit audible carbon monoxide alarms that comply with BS EN 50291-2:2019
- have all gas appliances serviced every year
- always use a Gas Safe registered engineer to fit, fix or service your appliances.

## Learn the warning signs

You cannot see, taste or smell carbon monoxide, but you may notice signs that something is wrong.

Look out for:

- yellow or orange flames instead of a clear blue flame
- sooting or staining around appliances
- pilot lights that frequently go out.

**If you notice any of these, contact a Gas Safe registered engineer to get the appliance checked.**

## If the alarm goes off follow the SAFE steps

### S

#### Step outside immediately

Make sure everyone leaves the holiday caravan or park home – get yourselves into fresh air.

### A

#### Avoid using appliances

Turn off the gas supply if it is safe to do so (at the meter or cylinder valve). Do not use any gas appliances.

### F

#### Find help

Immediately call the **National Gas Emergency Service (0800 111 999)**. If anyone feels unwell, seek medical advice by calling NHS 111. In an emergency, call 999.

### E

#### Ensure it is checked

Contact your park manager and arrange for a **Gas Safe registered engineer** to inspect the appliances. Do not return until it is declared safe.

## Don't block the ventilation

Gas appliances need a constant supply of air to burn safely. Suitable ventilation is built into holiday caravans and park homes to ensure your safety.

**Never cover or block ventilation openings - it could lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.**

## Fit audible carbon monoxide alarms

Carbon monoxide (CO) alarms provide an important early warning.

- There is no substitute for properly functioning, audible alarms. Do not be tempted to fit the cheaper non-audible or non-certified detectors.
- Fit one alarm in the living area and an additional alarm in or near sleeping areas. The final arrangement will depend on the layout of your holiday caravan or park home, the appliances you have and the manufacturer's instructions for the alarm being installed.
- Choose alarms that are suitable for caravans and comply with BS EN 50291-2:2019 – this means the alarm is fit for purpose.
- Install, use, test and maintain your alarm by following the manufacturer's instructions. These indicate where to place it, how often to test it, and when to replace it. Further guidance is available in BS EN 50292:2023.
- Test alarms regularly in line with the manufacturer's instructions (typically using the test/reset button), and keep a record of these checks.

## Get your gas appliances checked annually

All gas appliances should be serviced annually to keep them working safely and efficiently. This will reduce the chance of exposure to carbon monoxide and also reduce running costs.

If you let out your holiday caravan to holidaymakers, the law requires you to have a gas safety check carried out every year.

### Never carry out gas work yourself.

Only a Gas Safe registered engineer should fit, service or repair gas appliances.

Before work starts:

- check the engineer's ID card and qualifications
- make sure they are qualified for the type of gas you use (natural gas or LPG)
- ask for the gas safety record for the work carried out.

Your park manager may be able to recommend a suitable **Gas Safe registered engineer**.

## Useful links

**Gas Safe Register – Find an engineer:** [www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk) | 0800 408 5500

**Gas Safety Charity:** [www.gassafecharity.org.uk](http://www.gassafecharity.org.uk)

**The Carbon Monoxide and Gas Safety Society:** [www.co-gassafety.co.uk](http://www.co-gassafety.co.uk)