

SYMPTOMS OF CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

Some 30 people die each year from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning and **thousands more are made ill by exposure to it.** *[Government statistics]*

Poisonous carbon monoxide (CO) originates from badly maintained or badly serviced gas appliances. You can't see it, smell it, or taste it, but it will injure or even kill you if you breathe it in.

Early symptoms of CO poisoning are: (i) tiredness (ii) drowsiness (iii) headache (iv) pains in the chest and (v) stomach pains. Different people can have different symptoms. Often the effects can be confused with flu or food poisoning. If in doubt, consult your GP and ask for a simple blood test which will reveal the presence of CO in the bloodstream.

CO is measured in ppm (parts per million) and it is these levels that are shown on Gas-Elec landlord and homeowner Reports and which drive the following actions:

Carbon Monoxide Action Levels

Level 1 0-9 ppm

Normal. No action. This is a typical reading from outdoor sources, fumes from attached garages, heavy smoking, fireplace spillage and operation of unvented combustion appliances.

Level 2 10-35 ppm

Marginal. This level could become problematic in some situations.

Actions: (i) occupants to be advised of potential health hazard to small children, elderly people and persons suffering from respiratory or heart problems; (ii) advise landlord/home owner that appliance/installation should be disconnected.

Level 3 36-99 ppm

Excessive: Medical alert. Actions: Ask occupants to step outside and query any health symptoms. Advise them to seek medical attention. If occupants exhibit any symptoms of CO poisoning, have them taken to their GP or A&E.

Level 4 100-200 ppm

Level 5 Greater than 200 ppm

Dangerous. Medical alert. Emergency conditions exist.

Actions: Evacuate the building immediately and check occupants for health symptoms. Advise all occupants to seek medical attention but do not allow them to drive themselves.