

Carbon Monoxide Checklist

A quiet walkthrough for combustion appliances, detector placement, and symptom patterns.

Print this page to add a Carbon Monoxide Checklist to your Tracking Symptom Binder — note the season and which appliances are running — the pattern often follows the heating cycle.

WHAT IT IS

A colorless gas from incomplete combustion

Carbon monoxide is produced when fuels — natural gas, propane, oil, wood — burn incompletely. It is colorless and odorless, and binds to hemoglobin far more readily than oxygen. At low concentrations, it does not trigger standard residential detectors, yet can still cause persistent, diffuse symptoms over time.

SIGNS WORTH NOTICING

Flu-like patterns without fever

Persistent headaches, fatigue, dizziness, nausea, or cognitive difficulty that do not include fever — especially during heating season or when combustion appliances run most. Symptoms that improve after time away from home and affect more than one household member are particularly worth noting.

WHY IT GETS MISSED

Detectors calibrated for emergencies, not accumulation

Standard residential CO detectors are not required to alarm until concentrations reach 70 ppm for an extended period. A home can run at 15–50 ppm for weeks without triggering any alarm. Because the symptoms resemble flu or general fatigue, the environmental connection is rarely made without a low-level monitor.

WHAT TO NOTICE

Appliances, season, and where you feel it

Pay attention to whether symptoms worsen when the furnace, water heater, or fireplace runs — and whether they ease when windows are open or when you leave the home for a day or more. A pattern tied to season and appliance use is often the first reliable signal.

DATE CHECKED _____ AREAS COVERED _____

Check anything you notice. This is a record of observations, not conclusions — there are no wrong answers.

01 Combustion appliances

- Gas furnace, boiler, water heater, or gas dryer present in the home
Gas furnace in the basement — original to the house, last serviced two years ago.
- Gas stove, oven, or fireplace present and used regularly
- Flame color on gas burners appears yellow, orange, or uneven rather than steady blue

02 Detector placement

- Standard CO detector present — note model and whether it shows a digital readout
- Detector located near sleeping areas and on each occupied floor

03 Symptom patterns

- Headache, fatigue, dizziness, or nausea that worsens when the heat is running
- Symptoms noticeably better after time outside or away from home
- More than one household member or pet with overlapping symptoms

OBSERVATIONS

APPLIANCES PRESENT AND ANY KNOWN SERVICE HISTORY

WHEN SYMPTOMS FEEL STRONGEST (SEASON, ROOM, HEAT RUNNING)

NOTES

A checklist is a snapshot. The patterns that matter most tend to appear when you compare one across weeks, seasons, and rooms.