

CARBON MONOXIDE

The Hidden Killer

Carbon monoxide gas in the cab of your vehicle can kill you, directly or indirectly. Even if you're never exposed to a lethal concentration of it, a tiny amount of the gas can make you drowsy enough to have an accident. Know how to protect yourself from this invisible killer.

Why It's So Dangerous

Unlike natural gas, to which an odor-producing substance is added to make it easy to detect, carbon monoxide gives you no direct clue to its presence. It has no odor, no color, and no taste, nor does it irritate the skin.

The only way you know you're being poisoned by carbon monoxide is when the physical symptoms become present. If you get dizzy or drowsy, develop a headache or feel nauseated, carbon monoxide may be present.

The danger is that carbon monoxide has already gone to work on your body by the time you recognize those symptoms. During this period, it can severely impair your alertness and ability to function efficiently.

You may start to feel sleepy before you get a headache. Your vision and coordination may be affected.

Carbon monoxide can slow your reflexes and cloud your

thinking, so it's hard for you to respond quickly in an emergency.

How to Protect Yourself

No inspection you ever make is more important than the one that assures you your exhaust system is tight. Watch for signs of damage and seal any leak as soon as it develops.

Even when it's cold, make sure you've got fresh air coming into your cab. You could be recycling an atmosphere that has some carbon monoxide in it.

Stay back from the vehicles ahead of you. Remember, if you follow an auto or another truck too closely, its exhaust fumes may be swept into your air intake.

Stay back so this won't happen.

If You Have the Symptoms

Any time you feel the slightest tendency toward sleepiness, or if you experience a tightness across your forehead, it could mean that carbon monoxide is present.

Pull off the highway immediately. Air out your cab while you take a walk and breathe in some fresh air. Seek emergency help if you need it. Wait until you fully recover before you resume your trip.

When you feel alert,

inspect your exhaust system. If you have the slightest suspicion that there's a leak in your exhaust system, get it fixed at once.

After you return to the highway, proceed cautiously and let plenty of fresh air flow into your cab. Be prepared to stop again if the symptoms return. Make sure you, and the truck, are in safe condition before you continue._