

CARBON MONOXIDE AWARENESS WEEK CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT

Each year, November 1 to 7 is Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week in B.C. During this week, fire departments, educators, government and industry work together to teach people about the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning, the symptoms and sources, and how to avoid becoming ill.

Too many people in B.C. die, or become seriously ill, because of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. While the effects of CO poisoning can be devastating, they can be prevented. The best things to do is have all fuel-burning appliances inspected by a licensed contractor every year and install a carbon monoxide alarm that signals an alert when the gas is present.

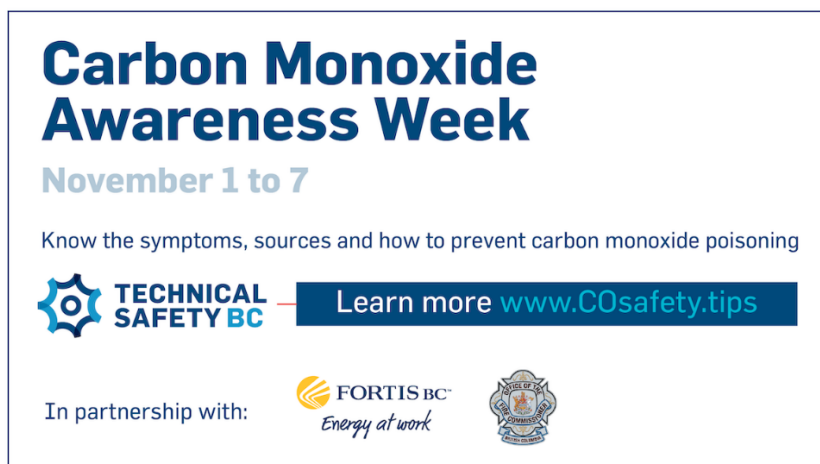
This toolkit contains key messages, suggestions, links and resources to support the different ways your fire department or organization can share the message about carbon monoxide safety in your community.

RESOURCES

A range of digital and printed resources are available at www.gov.bc.ca/CarbonMonoxideAwareness and www.COafety.tips to help you promote CO safety within your community. Visit these sites to download the following free resources:

- Website banner
- “Sorry we missed you” doorhangers
- Social media graphics and suggested posts
- News release template
- Email banner

Sample graphic:



GET INVOLVED

Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week might look a bit different this year, but there are different ways you can reach your community with life-saving messages in the event that traditional open houses, school and community visits aren't able to be held.

Social Media Campaign - #COsafety

Don't underestimate the power of social media. Use our pre-made social media graphics and suggested content to run a campaign on your social media channel(s). Watch for posts from campaign partners and other stakeholders and be sure to interact with them online.

The official hashtag in British Columbia is #COsafety All posts on social media should include this hashtag, along with any other tags that may be relevant to your activity. One example is #TestItTuesday, which is a great way to encourage people to test their CO alarms (you can mention testing smoke alarms at the same time!).

Working with the Media

- Contact local media well in advance of Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week to educate them about the importance of CO prevention.
- Invite the media to join your department's Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week event.
- Using the online template, create a news release to inform media about your Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week activities.
- Provide media with story ideas, safety announcements, statistics, safety tips and graphics. Visit www.gov.bc.ca/FireSafety/CarbonMonoxideAwareness and www.COafety.tips for free digital resources. Some possible story ideas include:
 - role of the fire department in CO prevention and awareness
 - how to install, test and maintain CO alarms
 - local incidents and lessons learned
- Work with your local newspaper(s) to create a Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week supplement section. Encourage the newspaper to sell advertising spots for the supplement to cover costs, and in return provide them with content for the supplement. Some content for the supplement could include:
 - feature stories and interviews
 - letter from the Fire Chief
 - photos (or provide photo opportunities for media to take their own photos)

Door-to-door Campaign

- A door-to-door campaign is a great way for fire departments to get out in the community to make sure people have CO alarms in their homes. If you are able to conduct door-to-door visits, or have people visit your fire department, be sure to follow all COVID-19 health and safety protocols.
- You can hand out free or discounted CO alarms, offer to test/change batteries in existing alarms, or just have a friendly conversation about the importance of CO alarms, as well as proper placement, testing, maintenance and replacement. Consider targeting your program to high-risk residents in your community, such as seniors.
- Leave a door hanger behind if the resident isn't home. You can order free printed door hangers from the [Fire Prevention Officers' Association of BC](http://www.firepreventionofficers.org) that include room for you to add your department's contact information, as well as CO safety and prevention tips.

KEY MESSAGES

- Have fuel-burning appliances installed and inspected regularly by a Technical Safety BC licensed gas contractor. Find a licensed contractor in your area using the online directory at www.technicalsaftybc.ca/find-contractor
- Never use equipment designed for outdoor use, such as barbecues, camp stoves, propane lanterns, generators or lawnmowers, in any enclosed space.
- Remove vehicles and gas-powered equipment from the garage immediately after starting the engine.
- When using a wood-burning fireplace, open the damper and partially open a window or door at the level of the fireplace. Close the damper only after the fire is completely out and ashes have cooled.
- Carbon monoxide alarms, in addition to regular appliance maintenance and functioning smoke alarms, can warn you if CO is present and provide extra protection for your home and family.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms in bedrooms or the hallway near sleeping areas on each level of your home.
- If your CO alarm is battery operated, check batteries at least twice a year.
- Replace all CO alarms according to manufacturers' instructions.
- If your alarm indicates high CO levels in your home or you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning:
 - Open all doors and windows and get outside to fresh air immediately.
 - Seek emergency medical attention for symptoms of CO poisoning. Symptoms include flu-like symptoms such as headaches, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, burning eyes, confusion, drowsiness and even loss of consciousness.
 - Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number and your gas service provider's 24-hour emergency line. Don't go back in the building until it's safe.
 - FortisBC: 1-800-663-9911
 - Pacific Northern Gas: 1-800-663-1173
 - After returning to the building, have a licensed contractor inspect your gas appliances.