



Carbon monoxide poisoning

Carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless, tasteless, poisonous gas produced by the incomplete burning of carbon-based fuels. If inhaled, it can prove fatal and is therefore commonly known as the 'silent killer'.

When fuels, such as coal, wood, petrol and oil, do not burn properly, excess and poisonous carbon monoxide gas is produced. If inhaled, it can enter the bloodstream and prevent oxygen from being carried around the body.

Carbon monoxide can be released from a gas appliance if it has been incorrectly fitted, badly repaired or poorly maintained. It can also occur if chimneys, flues or vents are blocked.

Every year in the UK, more than 200 people are hospitalised and around 40 people die as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning.



What are the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning?

Understanding the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning can help you to identify the warning signs. Symptoms can include headaches, nausea, vomiting, confusion, tiredness and breathing problems.



You should suspect carbon monoxide poisoning if:

- other people in your house, flat or workplace fall ill with similar symptoms
- your symptoms disappear when you go away (for example, on holiday) and return when you come back
- your symptoms tend to be seasonal – for example, you get headaches more often during the winter when the central heating is used more frequently
- your pets also become ill



How can I avoid a carbon monoxide leak?

Installing an audible carbon monoxide alarm in your home, arranging regular gas safety checks and being aware of your surroundings can help you stay safe at home. The following warning signs could indicate a carbon monoxide leak:

- black, sooty marks on the front covers of gas fires
- sooty marks on the walls around boilers, stoves or fires
- smoke building up in rooms due to a faulty flue
- yellow rather than blue flames coming from gas appliances



What should I do if I think my appliance is leaking carbon monoxide?

- Switch off the appliance and shut off the gas supply at the meter control valve
- Open all doors and windows to ventilate the room
- Call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999
- Visit your GP and report that you believe you may have been exposed to carbon monoxide

Can I make a compensation claim if I suffer from carbon monoxide poisoning?

In order to make a compensation claim for carbon monoxide poisoning, you must be able to prove that someone else's negligence resulted in your exposure to carbon monoxide. If you live in a rented property your landlord is legally responsible for your safety in your home; they must arrange for a gas safety check to be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer annually and keep a record of the safety check for two years. Likewise it is your employer's duty to protect you at work.

Thompsons Solicitors has a track record of handling compensation claims for those suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning and our specialist industrial disease solicitors will guide you through the process of making a claim.

Contact us

If you or someone you know has suffered from carbon monoxide poisoning, call us for compensation claim advice on **0800 0 224 224** or visit our dedicated carbon monoxide poisoning page:

www.thompsons.law.co.uk/industrial-disease/carbon-monoxide-poisoning