

HANGOVER? FLU? OR CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING?

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE
(YOUR LIFE MAY DEPEND ON IT)

hseⁿⁱ
CONTROLLING RISK TOGETHER

Students can be particularly at risk from Carbon Monoxide poisoning. For many it will be the first time you have been responsible for your own housing, so it's important for students to be aware of the risk and how to protect yourselves.

Carbon Monoxide is a highly poisonous gas that has no smell, colour or taste. It can be released by any appliance that burns oil, solid fuel, wood or gas, including boilers, if they are not properly installed and maintained.

When you inhale Carbon Monoxide it starves your body of oxygen. Even low level exposure over a long period can cause lasting damage to your health, including permanent brain damage. More serious cases can cause death.

What can I do to protect myself?

1. Whether you are living with your parents or in a rented house, check that your accommodation has an audible Carbon Monoxide alarm. If not, your landlord may provide one or you can buy one from DIY stores or supermarkets from around £20. CO alarms should comply with BS EN 50291 and carry a British/European approval mark (follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation and maintenance guidance).

2. If your rented house has gas - ask your landlord for an up to date gas safety certificate. Your landlord should make sure all fuel-burning appliances are safety checked and serviced annually by a qualified and registered engineer with the appropriate organisation:



Gas Safe Register (gas)
www.gassaferegister.co.uk
Tel: 0800 408 5500



**NIACS (all fuels)
Northern Ireland
Association
of Chimney Sweeps**
www.niacs.co.uk



**OFTEC (oil)
Oil Firing Technical
Association**
www.oftec.org
Tel: 0845 65 85 080



**Northern Ireland Coal
Advisory Service (solid fuel)**
www.coaladvisoryservice.com
Tel: 0845 712 5300

What are the symptoms?

The effects are like everyday illnesses (and hangovers!) so can be difficult to detect, but may include:

Headaches, dizziness, nausea, breathlessness, collapse and loss of consciousness.

Do not ignore these symptoms if:

- Other people in your house, flat or university building are having similar symptoms.
- You've recently moved into the building.
- Symptoms disappear when you leave the building or go away on holiday and return when you come back.
- Symptoms tend to be seasonal - e.g. headaches during the winter when the central heating is used more often.

Other danger signs include:

- Sooting or staining on or around your appliance.
- Excessive condensation in the room where the appliance is installed.
- Lazy yellow/orange coloured gas flames on cookers or boilers, rather than a sharp blue one.

If affected, what action do I take?

- Open doors or windows for ventilation and go into fresh air.
- Go to your GP or nearest A&E department.
- If it is urgent, call **999** for an ambulance.
- Call the relevant emergency advice line:
Gas Emergency Service (24 hours) **0800 002 001**
Oil (OFTEC) **0845 65 85 080**.

For further advice visit The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland website.

www.hseni.gov.uk/watchout

WATCH OUT



CARBON MONOXIDE KILLS

FOR PROTECTION ADVICE CALL

0800 0320 121

www.hseni.gov.uk/watchout

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A large type version of this text is available on request from HSENI.
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