

The Carbon Monoxide Checklist

By Steven Duval — Retired Gas Safe Registered Engineer, 50 years' trade experience

Carbon monoxide is known as the silent killer — you cannot see it, and you cannot smell it. Keep this checklist somewhere handy so you know exactly what to look for, and exactly what to do if you ever suspect a problem.

In an emergency

Severe symptoms (confusion, difficulty breathing, collapse):

Call 999 immediately and ask for an ambulance

Suspected exposure, less severe symptoms:

Call NHS 111

To report a suspected gas or carbon monoxide problem (any supplier):

National Gas Emergency Service: 0800 111 999

Warning Signs to Watch For

- ☐ **Frequent headaches**
More often, or more severe, than what's normal for you.
- ☐ **Dizziness or nausea**
A light-headed feeling, or feeling sick, without an obvious cause.
- ☐ **Symptoms tied to a specific appliance**
Notice if this happens only when a boiler, gas fire, or wall heater is running.
- ☐ **Symptoms that ease when you leave the property**
If you feel better away from home and worse when back, take this seriously.

If You Suspect Carbon Monoxide — Act in This Order

- 1** Turn off every gas appliance immediately — even if you're in the middle of using one.
- 2** Isolate the gas meter, if you're able to safely do so.
- 3** Open as many windows and outside doors as possible to get fresh air moving through the property.
- 4** Get yourself and your family outside, into fresh air, away from the property.
- 5** If anyone has severe symptoms (confusion, difficulty breathing, collapse), call 999 immediately.

6

For less severe suspected exposure, call NHS 111 for advice.

7

Call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999 to report the problem, regardless of your energy supplier.

8

Do not go back into the property until a Gas Safe registered engineer has confirmed it's safe.

Preventing a Problem in the First Place



Annual servicing

Have every gas appliance serviced once a year by a Gas Safe registered engineer — not just the boiler.



A detector in every relevant room

Fit a carbon monoxide alarm in any room with a gas appliance — kitchen, boiler cupboard, or a room with a gas fire.



Keep flues clear

Check outside flue terminals aren't blocked by sheds, plants, or nesting birds — a surprisingly common cause.



Watch the flame colour

A gas flame should burn a crisp, stable blue. A lazy yellow or orange flame is a warning sign.

A reminder

A carbon monoxide alarm is a second line of defence, not a replacement for proper annual servicing and maintenance of your gas appliances by a Gas Safe registered engineer.