



Non-Fire Carbon Monoxide Incidents Fact Sheet

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), regarding unintentional non-fire related CO exposure: ¹

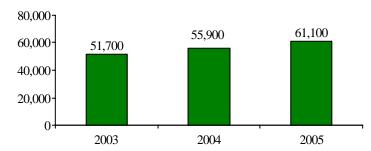
- Approximately **15,200 people were treated** annually during 2001-2003 in emergency departments
- During 2001-2002, an estimated 480 people died, on average, each year

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates **166 unintentional non-fire carbon monoxide poisoning deaths** were associated with consumer products on average, annually from 2002-2004.²

Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely. CO poisoning can be confused with flu symptoms, food poisoning and other illnesses. Some symptoms include shortness of breath, nausea, dizziness, light headedness or headaches. High levels of CO can be fatal, causing death within minutes.

In 2005, municipal fire departments responded to an estimated **61,100 non-fire carbon monoxide incidents**, where CO was present. An average of seven such calls an hour and an 18% increase from 2003.

Non-Fire Carbon Monoxide Incidents Reported by Responding Fire Departments, by Year



Source: NFIRS and NFPA survey.

• The peak time of day is between 6:00 p.m. and 9:59 p.m.

 January and December are the peak months for non-fire CO incidents.

 Almost 9 out of every 10 (89%) reported nonfire carbon monoxide incidents took place in the home

In 2003, there were an estimated **60,600 unintentional CO detector activations**, in which carbon monoxide was not detected; this includes CO detector malfunctions and false alarms. (Due to the increasingly large size of the national database, false alarms and false calls were not included in the publicly released NFIRS data for 2004 and 2005.)

Source: *Non-Fire Carbon Monoxide Incidents Reported in 2005*, by Jennifer D. Flynn, NFPA, Quincy, MA. June 2007. Liberal use of NFPA fact sheets is allowable with attribution. *Released October 2008*

¹ CDC, *Unintentional Non-Fire Related Carbon Monoxide Exposures-United States*, 2001-2003, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, January 21, 2005.

² Matthew V. Hnatov, *Non-Fire Carbon Monoxide Deaths Associated with the Use of Consumer Products 2003 and 2004 Annual Estimates*, Bethesda, MD: CPSC Division of Hazard Analysis, August 2007.