want to know more?

For more information about how you can prevent carbon monoxide poisoning on recreational boats and other boating safety information, contact:

- **United States Coast Guard**
  Boating Safety Divison (CG-BSX-2)
  2703 Martin Luther King Jr Ave, SE
  Washington, DC 20593-7501
  [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org)

- **National Marine Manufacturers Association**
  231 S. LaSalle Street, Suite 2050
  Chicago, IL 60604
  [www.nmma.org](http://www.nmma.org)
  312-946-6200

- **American Boat & Yacht Council, Inc.**
  613 Third Street, Suite 10
  Annapolis, MD 21403
  [www.abycinc.org](http://www.abycinc.org)
  410-990-4460

For information on how to get a free VESSEL SAFETY CHECK, visit [www.vesselsafetycheck.org](http://www.vesselsafetycheck.org) or contact your local U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary or United States Power Squadrons®.
**WHAT IS CARBON MONOXIDE?**

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas. It is produced when a carbon-based fuel—such as gasoline, propane, charcoal, or oil—burns.

Sources on your boat may include engines, gas generators, cooking ranges, space and water heaters.

**WHY IS IT SO DANGEROUS?**

Carbon monoxide (CO) enters your bloodstream through the lungs, blocking the oxygen your body needs. Prolonged exposure to low concentrations or very quick exposure to high concentrations can kill you.

Early symptoms of CO poisoning include irritated eyes, headache, nausea, weakness, and dizziness. These symptoms are often confused with seasickness or intoxication, so those affected may not receive the medical attention they need.

**THE U.S. COAST GUARD wants you to know...**

- CO can harm and even kill you inside or outside your boat.
- CO symptoms are similar to seasickness or alcohol intoxication.
- CO can affect you whether you’re underway, moored, or anchored.
- You cannot see, smell, or taste CO, but if you smell exhaust fumes, CO is present.
- CO can make you sick in seconds. In high enough concentrations, even a few breaths can be fatal.

...CO poisonings are preventable!!

**WHERE CAN CO ACCUMULATE?**

**ANYWHERE** in or around your boat.

- Inadequately ventilated canvas enclosures.
- Exhaust gas trapped in enclosed places.
- Blocked exhaust outlets.
- Another vessel’s exhaust.
- CO from the boat positioned next to you can be just as deadly.
- “Station wagon effect” or back drafting.
- At slow speeds, while idling, or stopped.

Be aware that CO can remain in or around your boat at dangerous levels even if your engine or the other boat’s engine is no longer running!

**HOW CAN YOU PROTECT OTHERS AND YOURSELF?**

- Know where and how CO may accumulate in and around your boat.
- If you can smell engine exhaust, you are inhaling CO.
- Follow all warnings and instructions for canvas, engine operations, etc.
- Maintain fresh air circulation throughout the boat at all times.
- Know where your engine and generator exhaust outlets are located and keep everyone away from these areas.
- Stay off the back deck and the swim platforms while the engines are running.
- Never enter areas under swim platforms where exhaust outlets are located unless the area has been properly ventilated.
- Although CO can be present without the smell of exhaust fumes, if exhaust fumes are detected on the boat, take immediate action to ventilate these fumes.
- Treat symptoms of seasickness as possible CO poisoning. Get the person into fresh air immediately. Seek medical attention—unless you’re sure it’s not CO.
- Install and maintain marine grade approved CO detectors.
  - Every alarm requires immediate action.
  - Replace detectors as recommended by the manufacturer.
- If CO is suspected, open all hatches, windows and ports to ventilate.
  - Changing course and speed to place boat heading into the wind can improve ventilation.
- Maintain your engine in accordance with manufacturers’ recommendations. Engines that are not tuned properly produce more CO.
- Follow the checklists provided in this pamphlet.
- Get a Vessel Safety Check.