

KNOWING ABOUT CARBON MONOXIDE — The Solutions

Know the Sources of CO on Your and Other People's Boats.

- Many sources of CO exist on boats with living quarters: generators, stoves, heating equipment and engines.
- If piloting a marine vessel, be aware that CO can sneak up on you without warning, diminishing your reaction time to averting accidents and/or injury.
- CO accidents often happen during summer when boats are sealed to increase the efficiency of air conditioning systems.
- Know the location of exhaust outlets on your vessel.
- When docked or rafted with another boat, be aware of exhaust emissions from the other boat.
- CO can accumulate outside your boat in inadequately ventilated canvas enclosures.
- Educate yourself and all passengers about where and how CO can accumulate in and around your boat.

The US Coast Guard and BoatUS Foundation want people to know that the best way to protect themselves from CO poisoning is to avoid places where the gas may be present and refrain from dangerous activities like teak surfing.

BoatUS and the US Coast Guard Recommend Marine CO Detectors for Your Boat.

Detectors are small and easy to install.

- Sleeping areas, main saloons, an enclosed fly-bridge and other areas where people spend time are areas where a CO detector should be considered.
- Avoid placing detectors near hatches or doors where fresh air might distort readings. Dead air spaces -- corners -- also should be avoided.
- Placing an alarm at eye level allows you to easily monitor any meters or warning lights on a unit.
- Some are battery-operated and others use the boat battery system as a power source.
- A proper marine CO detector has the UL 2034 marine mark, which means it has been tested by Underwriters Laboratories standard 2034. Make sure you purchase a *marine* CO detector.

Know How to Prevent CO Poisoning.

- Avoid having your cabin fill up with exhaust fumes.
- Know whether the wind is blowing fumes back into your boat or onto passengers.
- Create ventilation: open a window or hatch to facilitate airflow through the cabin while leaving the rear cabin door slightly open. Ventilation clears exhaust fumes.
- Alter your course so the wind is not directly behind the boat; allow the wind to break the vacuum behind the boat and prevent the gas fumes from being carried aboard.
- CO can seriously compound the effects of alcohol, so monitor drinking and watch out for those who are intoxicated: because CO poisoning symptoms are often mistaken for intoxication.

Be sure to get a Marine CO detector.

- Surveys by BoatUS show 41 percent of boat owners don't have a CO detector on their boat.
- Of those who do, many disconnect them because of frequent false alarms.
- Marine CO detectors of today are more reliable, sophisticated alarms.
- Marine CO detectors save lives.
- Remember, CO monitors cannot alert you to accumulations outside the boat.
- Maintain your CO detectors. Do not ignore any alarm, and replace detectors as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Routinely test the operation of each CO detector.