Carbon Monoxide

What is it?
Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a gas that you cannot see or smell. It is produced whenever something is burned incompletely or when something is burned in a closed-in area. It is toxic to all humans and animals. It is also the most commonly inhaled poisonous substance and is a common indoor air pollutant.

Where can it be formed in and around the house?
- An incorrectly adjusted or vented furnace
- Gas water heaters with improperly aligned or obstructed exhaust pipes
- Gas stoves that are left on for long periods of time or used as heaters
- Fireplaces that are blocked by debris
- Wood stoves
- Gas or kerosene space heaters that are used in unvented rooms
- Charcoal grills that are used inside as heaters or in garages or unvented areas
- Automobiles that are allowed to idle in closed garages

What are symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning?
- Severe headache
- Confusion about surroundings
- Sleepiness
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Dizziness
- Fainting
Sometimes, people with these symptoms think they are getting the flu.

Carbon monoxide poisoning can lead to death.
If carbon monoxide poisoning is suspected, move everyone to an area with fresh air, call 911 and the Palmetto Poison Center (1-800-222-1222).

What can you do to protect yourself from carbon monoxide poisoning where you live?
- Install carbon monoxide detectors to detect the presence of high levels of carbon monoxide in your home.
- Never use gas or kerosene space heaters or gas stoves in unvented rooms.
- Never use gas stoves or charcoal grills inside as heaters.
- Never stay in a closed garage with a car that is running.
- Check fuel-burning appliances such as water heaters, clothes dryer, and furnace connections to make sure they are operating correctly, and have a professional check the fireplace once a year.

For more information, visit:
http://www.dhec.sc.gov/carbonmonoxide
http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/coftsht.html