



Carbon Monoxide

Frequently Asked Questions

What is carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless gas that can be harmful when inhaled in large amounts.

How is carbon monoxide created?

Carbon monoxide is released when something is burned, and the heat of combustion causes carbon to react and combine with oxygen in the air. The greatest sources of carbon monoxide to outdoor air are cars, trucks and other vehicles or machinery that burn fossil fuels.

How much carbon monoxide is in the air in Florida?

To protect against exposure, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established two National Ambient Air Quality Standards for carbon monoxide, one based on the highest one-hour average concentration each day and the other based on the highest eight-hour average concentration each day. Florida has always met these two health-based standards. The outdoor concentrations of carbon monoxide have been declining for decades.

What are the sources of carbon monoxide?

Vehicles, such as cars, trucks, construction equipment, planes, trains and ships, (Mobile Source CO) are the largest manmade source of carbon monoxide, making up 77 percent of the total in 2014. Small commercial sources, such as asphalt paving, make up 19 percent of the total and include emissions for sources too small to report individually. Large industrial sources (Stationary Source CO) which require air permits, like power plants, make up only 3 percent of the emissions. Emissions from all sources have decreased significantly since 2000 as shown in the graph below. Both sources of CO have decreased on the order of the same amount since 2000. Stationary Source CO has decreased 58 percent and Mobile Source CO has decreased 66 percent.

