# London Fire Brigade reports sharp rise in carbon monoxide incidents amid energy crisis



The London Fire Brigade (LFB) has reported a worrying surge in carbon monoxide (CO) incidents over the past five years, with call-outs more than doubling to 1,714 between August 2024 and July 2025. CO, a colourless, tasteless, and odourless gas produced by the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, is often called the "silent killer" due to its undetectable nature without alarms. The LFB has recorded 7,764 such incidents over the past six years, underscoring an escalating public safety concern.

Assistant Commissioner Pamela Oparaocha urged residents to prioritise safety, especially during the colder months, when heating demand increases. She highlighted the risks associated with alternative heating methods, such as burning treated wood, which can emit toxic fumes and pose fire hazards due to embers. The Brigade’s advice stresses the importance of installing carbon monoxide detectors in all rooms with fuel-burning appliances and ensuring they are audible, including while occupants are asleep.

The rise in incidents has been partially attributed to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, which may be prompting households to use unsafe heating alternatives or delay essential servicing of heating appliances. The LFB recommends regular maintenance, including chimney and flue inspections by registered professionals, to minimise CO risks. Previous incidents, such as a 2023 carbon monoxide leak at a hotel in Bloomsbury and a large-scale evacuation in Bow following elevated CO levels, highlight the serious health hazards and disruption caused by CO exposure.

Data from earlier years confirm a longstanding increase in CO incidents in London. For instance, in 2017, 569 cases were reported, a significant rise from 207 in 2009, resulting in numerous injuries and fatalities. Such trends have led the Brigade to call for landlords to comply with legal requirements by fitting CO alarms in rental properties and for residents to regularly test smoke and CO alarms.

Recent emergency responses illustrate the scope of the problem. In March 2023, a carbon monoxide leak in the City of London led to evacuations of residents and pub-goers, while a January 2023 incident in Southgate involved dangerously high CO levels from an open fire in a neighbouring flat, prompting a safety warning from the Brigade. These events demonstrate the diverse environments in which CO risks can arise, from homes to commercial premises.

The LFB’s broader emergency data from August 2025 reveal that firefighters attend an average of six rescues daily across 43 types of emergencies, with CO leaks a recurrent issue. Public awareness campaigns continue to emphasise preventative measures, including fitting alarms, ensuring proper appliance use, and seeking financial aid for energy costs from local authorities and Citizens Advice.

As London faces colder seasons ahead, the Brigade’s warnings serve as a crucial reminder to residents: while cost-effective heating is an understandable priority, safety must never be compromised. Installing and maintaining carbon monoxide detectors, using suitable fuel sources, and securing professional servicing are key steps to prevent potential tragedies from this invisible threat.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.aol.com/articles/crews-respond-surge-carbon-monoxide-070759500.html), [[4]](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2025-news/august/london-firefighters-rescue-an-average-of-six-people-a-day-from-43-types-of-emergencies/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.aol.com/articles/crews-respond-surge-carbon-monoxide-070759500.html), [[3]](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2023-news/southgate-carbon-monoxide-alert-on-open-fires-prompts-warning-from-the-brigade-as-energy-bills-rise/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.aol.com/articles/crews-respond-surge-carbon-monoxide-070759500.html), [[3]](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2023-news/southgate-carbon-monoxide-alert-on-open-fires-prompts-warning-from-the-brigade-as-energy-bills-rise/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2018-news/carbon-monoxide-incidents-more-than-double-in-the-capital/), [[1]](https://www.aol.com/articles/crews-respond-surge-carbon-monoxide-070759500.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/incidents/2023/march/carbon-monoxide-leak-city-of-london/), [[3]](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2023-news/southgate-carbon-monoxide-alert-on-open-fires-prompts-warning-from-the-brigade-as-energy-bills-rise/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[4]](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2025-news/august/london-firefighters-rescue-an-average-of-six-people-a-day-from-43-types-of-emergencies/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.aol.com/articles/crews-respond-surge-carbon-monoxide-070759500.html), [[3]](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2023-news/southgate-carbon-monoxide-alert-on-open-fires-prompts-warning-from-the-brigade-as-energy-bills-rise/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.aol.com/articles/crews-respond-surge-carbon-monoxide-070759500.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2018-news/carbon-monoxide-incidents-more-than-double-in-the-capital/> - In 2018, the London Fire Brigade reported a significant increase in carbon monoxide (CO) incidents, with 569 cases attended in 2017 compared to 207 in 2009. This surge highlights the growing concern over CO poisoning, which has resulted in 24 deaths and 430 injuries since 2009. The Brigade urges residents to install CO alarms in all rooms containing fuel-burning appliances and to ensure landlords comply with legal requirements to fit alarms in rental properties. Regular testing of smoke alarms is also recommended to enhance safety.
3. <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2023-news/southgate-carbon-monoxide-alert-on-open-fires-prompts-warning-from-the-brigade-as-energy-bills-rise/> - In January 2023, the London Fire Brigade issued a safety warning following a carbon monoxide (CO) incident in Southgate, London. A resident reported a burning smell, leading to the discovery of dangerously high CO levels due to an open fire in an adjoining flat. The Brigade emphasizes the importance of regular chimney and flue maintenance, especially during colder months when alternative heating methods are more common. They advise residents to have chimneys swept by registered professionals and to use fireguards to prevent sparks and embers.
4. <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/2025-news/august/london-firefighters-rescue-an-average-of-six-people-a-day-from-43-types-of-emergencies/> - In August 2025, the London Fire Brigade reported that firefighters rescue an average of six people daily from 43 different types of emergencies. The data highlights the diverse challenges faced by the Brigade, including incidents involving carbon monoxide leaks, gas leaks, and hazardous materials. The statistics underscore the importance of public awareness and safety measures to prevent such emergencies. The Brigade continues to encourage residents to install and regularly test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in their homes to enhance safety.
5. <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/incidents/2023/march/carbon-monoxide-leak-city-of-london/> - In March 2023, the London Fire Brigade responded to a carbon monoxide leak on Middlesex Street in the City of London. Four fire engines and approximately 25 firefighters attended the scene, evacuating three people from a flat and advising 50 to 100 individuals from a pub and neighbouring flats to stand outside as a precaution. Firefighters used specialist equipment to systematically check for elevated chemical readings and isolated the gas supply. The incident was resolved without injuries, highlighting the importance of CO alarms and regular maintenance of fuel-burning appliances.
6. <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/incidents/2023/may/carbon-monoxide-leak-bow/> - In May 2023, the London Fire Brigade attended a carbon monoxide leak at a residential building on Rookwood Way in Bow. Eight fire engines and around 60 firefighters responded to the incident, evacuating 14 people before their arrival. Three men suffered from the effects of carbon monoxide poisoning and were taken to hospital. Firefighters used specialist equipment to conduct a systematic sweep of the building, ensuring no elevated readings remained before leaving the scene. The Brigade emphasizes the importance of fitting CO alarms in all rooms containing fuel-burning appliances.
7. <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/incidents/2023/april/carbon-monoxide-leak-bloomsbury/> - In April 2023, the London Fire Brigade responded to a carbon monoxide leak at a hotel on Tavistock Place in Bloomsbury. Two fire engines and approximately ten firefighters evacuated 17 people from the four-storey hotel. Four individuals, including one man, one woman, and two children, suffered from the effects of carbon monoxide inhalation and were taken to hospital. The cause of the leak was under investigation, and the Brigade advises residents to install CO alarms in all rooms with fuel-burning appliances and to ensure they are audible throughout the property.