

# General Safety Protocol & Field Guidelines

Welcome to the Air Aware testing team! As a field tester, your work provides vital environmental health insights to our community. Your safety and well-being, along with the safety of the participants and facility occupants we serve, are our absolute top priorities.

No data point or completed test is ever more important than your health, personal security, or comfort. Please review and adhere to the following core safety principles for every site visit—whether in a home, church, or community facility:

## 1. The "Safety First" Mindset & Buddy System

- **Never Work Alone:** Always conduct field visits in pairs. Work as a team to monitor gas levels, manage equipment, maintain situational awareness, and support each other.
- **Trust Your Instincts:** You have full authority to pause, postpone, or leave a testing site at any time if you feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or unwell for any reason—no questions asked.
- **Check-In & Check-Out:** Always notify your team lead or designated contact upon arriving at a testing location and immediately after safely exiting.

## 2. Facility & Site Awareness

- **Assess the Location First:** Before entering, inspect the surroundings for potential hazards (e.g., loose pets, poor exterior lighting, icy or uneven walkways, or active disruptions).
- **Identify Clear Exit Paths:** Once inside any facility, room, or kitchen space, locate primary and secondary exit routes immediately. Never position yourself where your path to an exit is blocked.
- **Keep Communication Ready:** Keep your mobile phone fully charged and on your person at all times (not stowed away in a gear bag), with key program contacts saved.

## 3. Gas Exposure & Physical Health

- **Keep Monitors Visible & Active:** Ensure monitoring devices are turned on, properly calibrated, and positioned where both you and facility occupants can see readings clearly.
- **Listen to Your Body:** If you, your partner, or any occupant experience headaches, dizziness, nausea, or throat/eye irritation, step outside into fresh air immediately—regardless of what the monitoring equipment reads.



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## 4. Setting Boundaries & De-Escalation

- **Prioritize Calm Departure:** If an occupant, staff member, or visitor becomes hostile, aggressive, visibly impaired, or creates an environment that feels unsafe, do not argue or attempt to resolve the conflict.
- **Excuse Yourselves Gracefully:** Calmly pause testing, state that you need to step outside to check equipment or make a quick call, and exit the building together immediately.

## Testers Do's and Don'ts

### Do!

- **Work in pairs:** Always work in teams of two whenever possible for safety, accountability, and support.
- **Confirm consent before starting:** Verify consent for testing, surveys, and photos/videos.
- **Direct participants to resources:** Share and direct participants to the Faith in Place Air Aware website for additional information and resources on CO and NO<sub>2</sub>
- **Pass along unresolved questions:** If participants ask questions you cannot answer, record them and forward them to April ([april@faithinplace.org](mailto:april@faithinplace.org)) for follow-up.
- **Monitor readings continuously:** Keep an eye on real-time gas levels throughout the entire visit, not just at the start or end.
- **Act on safety thresholds:** Thoroughly check device readings. If high levels of CO and NO<sub>2</sub> are detected, immediately follow the emergency evacuation protocol.
- **Watch for lower-level spikes:** Pay attention to elevated low-level readings (e.g., persistent CO above 35ppm or significant NO<sub>2</sub>) and increase ventilation or shorten testing if needed.
- **Heed physical warning signs:** Step outside for fresh air immediately if you or your partner experience headaches, dizziness, nausea, chest tightness, or throat irritation—even if the monitor shows low levels.
- **Keep equipment visible:** Handle all devices with care (refer to the device instruction guide) and keep monitors visible to participants while testing.
- **Protect and charge gear:** Transport devices in protective cases, and ensure all batteries are fully charged before every visit.
- **Keep intake ports clear:** Ensure hands, clothing, and tubing do not block sensor inlets while taking measurements.



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## **Don't!**

- **Don't take unauthorized photos or videos:** Never take media without signed consent from the facility owner. Photos of minors (under 18) require a signed consent form specifically from a legal guardian—no one else can grant permission.
- **Don't wander:** Never wander through a participant's facility; ask for and receive permission before entering any room.
- **Don't touch without asking:** Don't touch appliances or move personal objects without explicit permission.
- **Don't dismiss concerns:** Never minimize or dismiss questions or concerns raised by participants.
- **Don't ignore symptoms or alerts:** If CO or NO2 levels are elevated, never ignore physical symptoms or bypass alert protocols.
- **Don't re-enter an evacuated facility:** If a high CO- evacuation is triggered, do not go back inside to retrieve equipment or belongings until safety clearance is given.
- **Don't attempt appliance repairs:** Do not attempt to adjust, repair, or service gas stoves or appliances. Your role is strictly to test and monitor.
- **Don't leave equipment unattended:** Always keep gear in sight and under your control during the visit.
- **Don't expose sensors to extreme heat:** Avoid holding sampling probes directly in open flames or extremely hot exhaust streams.
- **Don't use harsh chemicals near sensors:** Never apply liquid spray cleaners, alcohol wipes, or aerosols on or near sensor ports, as chemicals can ruin the sensors.
- **Don't use damaged gear:** If a device drops, displays an error code, or fails its self-test, REPORT its immediately to April ([april@faithinplace.org](mailto:april@faithinplace.org)) and ship it back.

## **Evaluation Plan**

### **Step 1: Record Context & Initial Response**

- Check reading level on the personal monitor immediately.
- If readings are under 100 ppm: Open windows and turn on exhaust fans to ventilate.



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- Record context details: Note the exact level of carbon monoxide, specific reading locations, and if/how long appliances (stoves, furnaces, water heaters) were running prior to testing.

## Step 2: Follow Action Protocols Based on Reading Level

### 35–49 ppm (Elevated but Moderate)

- Inform all participants and household occupants of the reading.
- Explain that readings may be linked to malfunctioning equipment, active appliance use, or poor ventilation.
- Open windows/doors to increase ventilation.
- Contact the participant gas utility company to report elevated levels.

### 50–99 ppm (High)

- Inform facility occupants immediately.
- Explain the risks: sustained levels at this range indicate unsafe indoor air conditions.
- Recommend that participants stop using the suspected appliance immediately until it is inspected by a professional.
- Conduct mandatory Benzene testing for this range.
- Open windows to ventilate the space.
- Contact the participant's gas utility company (e.g., Peoples Gas at 866-556-6002, Nicor, or local provider).
- **If anyone displays symptoms (headache, dizziness, fatigue, nausea, confusion):**
  - **Evacuate the facility immediately.**
  - **Call 911 once safely outdoors.**

### 100+ ppm (Dangerous / Emergency)

- Evacuate immediately: Get all occupants and testers out of the facility right away. Do not stay inside to open windows or collect extra gear.
- Call 911 from outside the facility and report high carbon monoxide levels.
- Contact the participant's gas utility company emergency line.
- Advise residents to seek urgent medical evaluation if anyone feels unwell.

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- End the testing session immediately. Do NOT re-enter the facility under any circumstances until emergency services or gas utility officials officially clear it.
- Remain with facility members at a safe distance outside until emergency help arrives.