



Ten Tips to Prevent the "Silent Killer," Carbon Monoxide Poisoning California Poison Control System, January 17, 2011

It was a sad new year in Los Angeles on January 1, where a woman mourned the loss of both her mother and grandmother who died from carbon monoxide given off as a result of a gas oven door left open to stay warm. One week later, 11 students in Vermont were hospitalized for carbon monoxide poisoning that occurred because of a faulty furnace. And on January 16, four members of an Oakhurst CA family died from carbon monoxide emitted from a gasoline-powered electricity generator running inside their home. These incidents are a painful reminder that many people are unaware of the danger from this "silent killer."

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless odorless gas undetectable to the human senses, so people may not know that they are being exposed. Products that are typically involved in CO poisonings include improperly used or malfunctioning fuel-burning appliances such as furnaces, ranges, water heaters and room heaters; engine-powered equipment such as portable generators; fireplaces; and charcoal that is burned in homes and other enclosed areas.

Symptoms range from headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea, dizziness to confusion, vomiting, loss of muscular coordination and loss of consciousness.

Carbon monoxide poisoning can be of slow or swift onset depending on circumstances. But it is deadly. The California Poison Control, in an effort to raise public awareness, has issued the following Ten Tips to Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning. We ask your cooperation in distribution of these tips to ensure more lives are not lost this winter when people are trying to stay warm. With proper prevention, this "silent killer" can be stopped.

1. Have all heating equipment installed properly, and have your home's heating system inspected by a professional prior to turning the heat on when cold weather season begins.
2. Carbon monoxide detectors should be installed in all homes and in apartments. When a CO detector goes off, assume that a real CO danger is present, and get all person and pets out of the structure immediately. Do not re-enter until a heating professional or gas company or fire department has declared the area safe from CO.
3. During home renovations, ensure that appliance vents and chimneys are not blocked by tarps or debris. Make sure appliances are in proper working order when renovations are complete.
4. Do not cover the bottom of natural gas or propane ovens with aluminum foil. Doing so might block the air flow through the appliance and can produce excessive amounts of CO due to incomplete burning of the gas.
5. Never use portable fuel-burning camping equipment inside a home, garage, vehicle or tent unless it is specifically designed for use in an enclosed space and provides instructions for safe use in such an area.



6. In climates with snow, make sure that chimneys and vents do not become blocked with snowfall.
7. Never operate a portable generator or any other gasoline engine-powered tool either in or near an enclosed space such as a garage, house, or other building, or outside of an open window.
8. Do not use charcoal or hibachi grills to cook with indoors or for heating living areas under any circumstances.
9. Do not attempt to heat your home by turning on the oven or clothes dryer and leaving its door open.
10. Never let a car engine run inside a closed space such as a garage. Drive out promptly after starting the car, and turn the car engine off as soon as you drive into an enclosed space. Never have a garage door closed with a running vehicle inside, even for a few seconds

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