



Bitter Winter Cold and Snow Heighten Risk of the Silent Killer Carbon Monoxide

Protect Households with Inexpensive Detectors Available Nationally

San Francisco – March 2, 2015 – Carbon monoxide is winter's "silent killer."

Carbon monoxide kills an average of 430 Americans each year (not including fires) and sickens many others. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless and tasteless gas undetectable to the human senses, so people don't realize that they are being exposed. Products that are typically involved in poisonings include 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 happen slowly or swiftly depending on circumstances. California Poison Control, in an effort to raise public awareness, offers 10 tips to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning:

1. Have all heating equipment installed properly, and have the home's heating system inspected by a professional prior to turning the heat on when cold weather begins.
2. Carbon monoxide detectors should be installed in all homes, apartments and workplaces. When a detector goes off, assume that a real danger is present, and get all people and pets out of the structure immediately. Do not re-enter until a heating professional, gas company or fire department has declared the area safe.
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 blocks the combustion air flow through the appliance and can produce carbon monoxide.

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. Keep the generator as far from the house as possible.
8. Do not use charcoal or hibachi grills indoors to cook with or for heat under any circumstances.
9. Do not attempt to heat your home by turning on the oven or clothes dryer and leaving the 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.

About CPCS

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