

Family Winter Weather Plan

One major problem associated with winter snow storms are power outages. When the power goes out furnaces and other appliances don't work. The use of alternative sources of fuel or electricity for heating, cooling, or cooking can cause carbon monoxide (CO) to build up in a home, garage, or camper and poisons the people and animals inside. Carbon monoxide is a tasteless, colorless, and odorless gas that is produced when fuels combust (burn). These fumes are produced by gasoline engines, stoves, generators, lanterns, and gas ranges, or by burning charcoal and wood. CO from these sources can build up in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. The people and animals in these spaces can be poisoned and can die from breathing CO.

Mitigating the risk of CO Poisoning

Perhaps one of the best means to mitigate risk of CO poisoning is to strategically place CO detectors in the vicinity of appliances, and:

- Wood should only be burned in fireplaces with adequate ventilation. Chimneys and flues should be free from obstructions.
- Never use a gas range or oven to heat a home.
- Never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a garage.
- Never run a motor vehicle, generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine outside an open window, door, or vent where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area.
- Never run a generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed structure, even if the doors or windows are open, unless the equipment is professionally installed and vented. Keep vents and flues free of debris, especially if winds are high. Flying debris can block ventilation lines.
- Never use a charcoal grill, hibachi, lantern, or portable camping stove inside a home, tent, or camper.
- If conditions are too cold, seek shelter with friends or at a community shelter.

How to Recognise CO Poisoning

Exposure to CO can cause loss of consciousness and death. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Nausea & Vomiting
- Chest Pain
- Confusion

Every Year Over 400 People Die
of Accidental CO Poisoning!
(and that is before any disaster strikes...)

People who are sleeping or who have been drinking alcohol can die from CO poisoning before ever having symptoms. It is thought that most people will think that sleep will aid in their recovery from the symptoms listed above - They are the victims who will never wake up. If you feel these symptoms or notice a family member exhibiting these symptoms, shut off appliances and move to fresh air and consult a health care professional immediately!