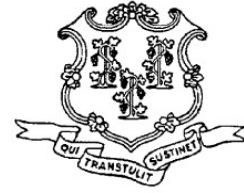


News



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As Temperatures Drop, Risk of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Rises

HARTFORD – Now that CT residents have turned on the heat in their homes, it is especially important to remember about the dangers of carbon monoxide gas. Everyone who uses oil, natural gas, liquid propane, or wood and pellet stoves should make sure that their heating system has been cleaned and inspected within the last year. If the burning of fuel is incomplete, carbon monoxide gas can form and build up in your home.

The deadly gas has no odor or warning properties. A carbon monoxide alarm is the only way to know if it is building up in your home. If you have a carbon monoxide alarm, it is important to test it to make sure that it works. If you don't have one, now is the time to purchase one. Make sure to place the carbon monoxide alarm in your living space, preferably close to bedrooms or where you spend the most time. You can also place another carbon monoxide alarm in the basement near the furnace as an early warning signal. Even if you heat your home with electricity instead of burning fuel, if you use a portable generator or a stationary home backup generator during a power outage, it is very important to have a working carbon monoxide alarm in your living space because the deadly gas can enter your home by getting in around window casings, door frames, and any penetrations through outside walls.

Sometimes it is hard to tell if you have early symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, because those symptoms can resemble the flu- headache, feeling light headed, and sleepiness are common to both illnesses. If there are other people in the house and a number of them develop these symptoms around the same time, carbon monoxide gas may be seeping into your living space. The longer you are exposed, the more dangerous it is. Carbon monoxide quickly gets into the bloodstream, where it replaces oxygen. If not treated quickly, it can cause brain damage and death. If you think you may have carbon monoxide poisoning, get people and pets out of the house immediately. Once outside, call 911 from a cell phone or neighbor's house.

Carbon monoxide alarms are required in all Connecticut public and private school buildings and in certain one and two family homes that have a building permit for new occupancy issued on or after October 1, 2005. If you are buying or selling a one or two family home that has a building permit for new occupancy issued before October 1, 2005, the seller must provide an affidavit certifying that either the home is equipped with working carbon monoxide detection and warning equipment, or, that there is no exposure source- specifically, no fuel-burning appliance, fireplace, or attached garage.

Specific questions about required placement of carbon monoxide detection and warning equipment, and about battery vs. hardwiring or other technologies should be directed to your local building official or local fire marshal.

For more information about the dangers of carbon monoxide, contact your local health department, or the CT Department of Public Health at 860-509-7740, or visit our website at <http://www.ct.gov/dph/CO> .