

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

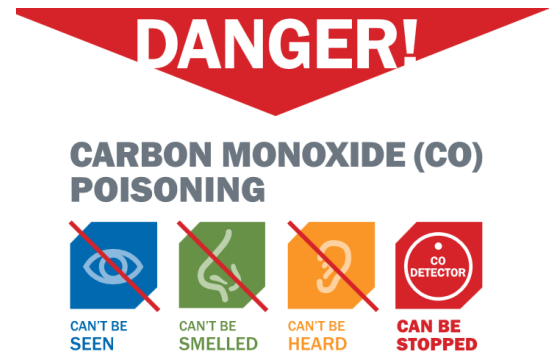
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Reduce the Risk of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning over the Winter

Eau Claire, WI – December 22nd, 2015. It can't be seen. It can't be smelled. It can't be heard. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas (CO) created whenever any fuel source such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal is burned. Many CO poisonings occur during the winter months when heaters are in high use and windows and doors tightly shut. Each year, an average of 430 deaths occurs from unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning in the United States. In Eau Claire County an average of 7 residents annually visit the emergency room for CO poisoning. CO poisoning is a preventable problem and as a community we should strive to prevent any incidents of CO poisoning.



Carbon monoxide is often called the “invisible killer” as it enters the body, undetected, through your breathing. Therefore, knowing the symptoms of CO poisoning is important. Symptoms may include headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, sleepiness, and confusion. Do not ignore symptoms, particularly if more than one person is feeling them. If you suspect CO poisoning, get outside to fresh air immediately, and then contact your local fire department or Communications Center at 911 for immediate help!

“By following recommendations, like never warming-up a car in a garage (even with the garage door open) to installing CO detectors outside of each sleeping area, you can reduce the risk of CO poisoning and keep your family safe and healthy,” says Phil Schumacher, Environmental Health Specialist for the Eau Claire City-County Health Department.

Below are additional tips to prevent the potential for Carbon Monoxide poisoning.

- Install CO alarm(s) with battery backup outside of sleeping areas.
 - *WI state law now requires that all homes have a CO detector on every level.*
- Test your CO alarm(s) frequently and replace dead batteries.
- Have a trained professional inspect, clean, and tune-up central heating system (furnaces, flues, and chimneys) annually. Repair any leaks promptly.
- Do not idle your vehicle inside a garage.
- Do not use a gas oven to heat your home, even for a short time.
- Do not use any gasoline-powered engines, such as portable generators, in enclosed spaces, including your garage.
- Make certain that doors on all wood stoves fit tightly.
- Do not sleep in any room with an unvented gas or kerosene space heater.



If you suspect you may have a carbon monoxide problem in your home, you may contact the Eau Claire City-County Health Department at 715-839-4718. The Health Department can test your home for the presence of carbon monoxide. To find out more information about CO poisoning, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/co/>.