

Silent invader kills hundreds threatens; thousands...

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is odorless, colorless, tasteless, and lethal.

This silent invader is the No. 1 cause of poisoning deaths in the US, killing over 400 Americans each year, hospitalizing 4,000 more, and sending an additional 20,000 to emergency rooms. These news clips from close to home and across the nation tell only part of the story:

Clarksville, TN – September 18: Fumes from a generator leaked into a camper, killing three men and two women who were at a biker festival/ toy run to raise money and provide toys for needy children.

Frisco, TX – Oct 8: 15 people – many of them teens preparing for homecoming – were hospitalized after suffering carbon monoxide poisoning at a Frisco hair salon. Firefighters evacuated 50 people from the salon and neighboring businesses Saturday, after being alerted to the incident caused by a vent pipe disconnected from the salon’s water heater.

Denver, CO – Oct 10: Carbon monoxide poisoning from an “old” furnace sent a woman to hospital.

Mequon, WI – Oct 8: Four members of a local family and a first responder were hospitalized from carbon monoxide exposure; the homeowner reported the family had turned on the heating system for the first time this season.

Gunnison, CO – Feb 7: Fifty-four people suffered carbon monoxide poisoning during a youth hockey tournament.

Ellicott City, MD – Sept 1: Carbon monoxide poisoning from a generator in a garage left a man dead in his home and sent his wife and son to hospital in critical condition.

Health Effects: Headache, dizziness, loss of coordination, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain and confusion are the most common symptoms of CO poisoning. Because symptoms mimic other illnesses, CO poisoning can be difficult to diagnose. High levels can cause unconsciousness and death. People who are sleeping or intoxicated can die before experiencing symptoms.

Sources: All fossil fuel-burning devices generate CO. These include charcoal, wood, oil, natural gas, propane, kerosene, coal, diesel, and gasoline. *Generators produce 100 times more CO than automobile exhaust and lead to more than half of CO poisoning deaths.*



Prevention: Proper use and maintenance of generators and fossil fuel-burning appliances is the first step in preventing CO poisoning. Installing Underwriters Laboratories (UL) approved detectors is next. Plug-in detectors with battery back-up and sound alarms placed in or near sleep areas are best. Have fuel-burning heating systems, chimneys, and inspected annually by a qualified technician.

Emergency Response: Heed your detector if it alarms, and don’t ignore symptoms, particularly if more than one person experiences them. Get fresh air immediately and call 911. If you go to the hospital, say that you suspect CO poisoning. Call the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222) if your detector goes off and no one has symptoms.

Why is it important to have heating systems and appliances serviced by a professional?

What are the dangers of kerosene space heaters? How can they be minimized?

How can a home be safely heated during an extended power failure?

How can you avoid CO poisoning from your vehicle?

FRIDAY

DATA: CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL; NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL; VARIOUS NEWS SOURCES

14 OCT 2011



FALL PROTECTION **RED** OR **GREEN**; RIGGING: **RED**; ELECTRICAL **BLUE**

TOOLBOX TOPICS

