

Safety Update

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

November 2009

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless, poisonous gas that can cause sudden illness and death if present in sufficient concentration in the ambient air. When power outages occur during emergencies such as hurricanes or winter storms, the use of alternative sources of fuel or electricity for heating or cooking can cause CO to build up in a home, garage, or camper and poison the people and animals inside. Generators, grills, camp stoves, or other gasoline, propane, natural gas, or charcoal-burning devices should never be used inside a home, basement, garage, or camper - or even outside near an open window or window air conditioner.

How to Recognize CO Poisoning:

The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and altered mental status.

You Can Prevent Carbon Monoxide Exposure

- **Do** have your heating system, water heater and any other gas, oil, or coal burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year.
- **Do** install a battery-operated CO detector in your home and check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall. If the detector sounds leave your home immediately and call 911.
- **Do** seek prompt medical attention if you suspect CO poisoning and are feeling dizzy, light-headed, or nauseous.
- **Don't** use a generator, charcoal grill, camp stove, or other gasoline or charcoal-burning device inside your home, basement, or garage or near a window.
- **Don't** run a car or truck inside a garage attached to your house, even if you leave the door open.
- **Don't** burn anything in a stove or fireplace that isn't vented.
- **Don't** heat your house with a gas oven.

Food Safety Tips

Meat and poultry defrosted in the refrigerator may be re-frozen before OR after cooking. If thawed by other methods, cook before re-freezing.

Never leave cooked food out over 2 hours. (1 hour in temperature above 90 °F) Bacteria that cause food borne illness grow rapidly at room temperature.

Cook ground meats to 160° F; ground poultry to 165° F. Beef, veal and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops may be cooked to 145° F; all cuts of fresh pork, 160° F. Whole poultry should reach 180° F in the thigh; breasts, 170° F.

Cold Weather Precautions



- If possible, bring your pets indoors or provide adequate shelter to keep them warm with access to unfrozen water.
- Keep several days' supply of these items:
 - Food that needs no cooking or refrigeration, such as bread, crackers, cereal, canned foods, and dried fruits.
- Water stored in clean containers, or purchased bottled water (5 gallons per person) in case your water pipes freeze and rupture.
- Medicines that any family member may need.
- Prepare your vehicle for winter:
 - Keep vehicle in good running condition.
 - Replace worn tires and maintain proper tire pressure.
 - Have radiator system serviced, check and add antifreeze is necessary.
 - Keep gas tank near full to help avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.
- Extreme cold can cause water pipes in your home to freeze and sometimes rupture. When very cold temperatures are expected:
 - Leave all water taps slightly open so they drip continuously.
 - Keep the indoor temperature warm.
 - Improve the circulation of heated air near pipes.

Safely is the best way to work!