DIVISION OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
STATE OF MONTANA

BUSINESS & LABOR
EXHIBIT NO. #8
DATE 1/20/09
BILL NO. SB161

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January 20, 2009

SB 161

Senate Bill 161 as written would increase the minimum level of safety for residents of rental properties in Montana.

Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels burn incompletely, and can cause flu like symptoms and in severe instances can cause death within minutes.

Carbon monoxide detectors are designed to alert the occupants when the level of carbon monoxide is elevated, before the average adult would experience any symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.

In 2005 municipal fire departments responded to an estimated 61,100 non-fire carbon monoxide incidents where carbon monoxide was present nationwide. Approximately 15,000 people are treated for exposure to carbon monoxide and 166 people die from unintentional carbon monoxide annually.

The Montana State Fire Marshal supports installing carbon monoxide detectors in all residential dwellings to enhance the safety of Montana's residents.

We ask you to please support SB 161.

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The Silent Killer

Non-Fire Carbon Monoxide Incidents Fact Sheet

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), regarding unintentional non-fire related CO exposure: [1]

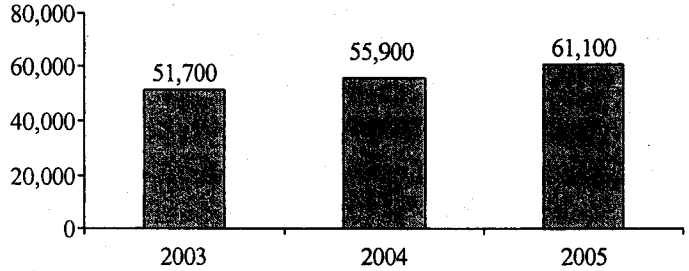
- Approximately **15,200 people were treated** annually during 2001-2003 in emergency departments
- During 2001-2002, an estimated **480 people died**, on average, each year

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates **166 unintentional non-fire carbon monoxide poisoning deaths** were associated with consumer products on average, annually from 2002-2004.[2]

Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely. CO poisoning can be confused with flu symptoms, food poisoning and other illnesses. Some symptoms include shortness of breath, nausea, dizziness, light headedness or headaches. High levels of CO can be fatal, causing death within minutes.

In 2005, municipal fire departments responded to an estimated **61,100 non-fire carbon monoxide incidents**, where CO was present. An average of seven such calls an hour and an 18% increase from 2003.

Non-Fire Carbon Monoxide Incidents Reported by Responding Fire Departments, by Year



Source: NFIRS and NFPA survey.

- The peak time of day is between 6:00 p.m. and 9:59 p.m.
- January and December are the peak months for non-fire CO incidents.
- Almost 9 out of every 10 (89%) reported non-fire carbon monoxide incidents took place in the home

In 2003, there were an estimated **60,600 unintentional CO detector activations**, in which carbon monoxide was not detected; this includes CO detector malfunctions and false alarms. *(Due to the increasingly large size of the national database, false alarms and false calls were not included in the publicly released NFIRS data for 2004 and 2005.)*

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[1] CDC, *Unintentional Non-Fire Related Carbon Monoxide Exposures-United States, 2001-2003,* Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, January 21, 2005.
[2] Matthew V. Hnatov, *Non-Fire Carbon Monoxide Deaths Associated with the Use of Consumer Products 2003 and 2004 Annual Estimates,* Bethesda, MD: CPSC Division of Hazard Analysis, August 2007.

Source: *Non-Fire Carbon Monoxide Incidents Reported in 2005*, by Jennifer D. Flynn, NFPA, Quincy, MA. June 2007.
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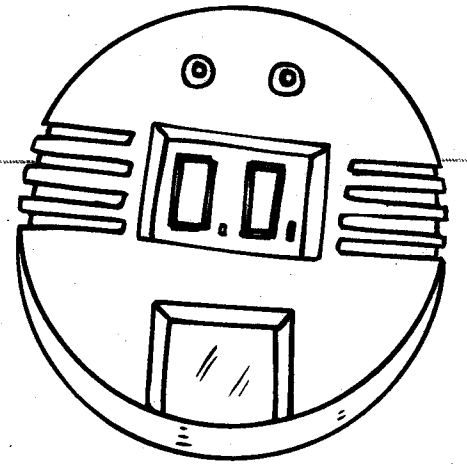
Released October 2008

Carbon Monoxide Safety



Carbon monoxide (CO), often called the silent killer, is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels burn incompletely. Extremely high levels of poisoning can be fatal, causing death within minutes.

SAFETY TIPS

- **Install** CO alarms inside your home to provide early warning of carbon monoxide.
- **CO alarms should be installed** in a central location outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes or standards. For the best protection, interconnect all CO alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- **Follow** the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
- **Combination smoke and CO alarms must be installed** in accordance with requirements for smoke alarms.
- **Choose** a CO alarm that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- **Call** your local fire department's non-emergency number to find out what number to call if the CO alarm sounds.
- **Test** CO alarms at least once a month; replace them according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- **If the audible trouble signal sounds**, check for low batteries. If the battery is low, replace it. If it still sounds, call the fire department.
- **Have** fuel-burning heating equipment and chimneys inspected by a professional every year before cold weather sets in.
- **When using** a fireplace, open the flue for adequate ventilation.
- **Never use** your oven to heat your home.
- **If you need to** warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not covered with snow.
- **During and after a snowstorm**, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow build-up.
- **A generator should be used** in a well-ventilated location outdoors away from windows, doors and vent openings.
- **Only use** barbecue grills — which can produce CO — outside.
- **Use** battery-powered lights in tents, trailers and motor homes and motor boats.
- **If the CO alarm sounds**, immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door. Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for. Call for help from a fresh air location and stay there until emergency personnel arrives to assist you.
- **CO alarms are not** substitutes for smoke alarms.

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Exposing an Invisible Killer

A Factsheet on the Dangers of Carbon Monoxide

Each year in America, unintentional carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning claims more than 500 lives and sends another 15,200 people to hospital emergency rooms for treatment.[1]

The U. S. Fire Administration (USFA) and the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) would like you to know that there are simple steps you can take to protect yourself from deadly carbon monoxide fumes.

UNDERSTANDING THE RISK

What is carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless and toxic gas. Because it is impossible to see, taste or smell the toxic fumes, CO can kill you before you are aware it is in your home. At lower levels of exposure, CO causes mild effects that are often mistaken for the flu. These symptoms include headaches, dizziness, disorientation, nausea and fatigue. The effects of CO exposure can vary greatly from person to person depending on age, overall health and the concentration and length of exposure.

Where does carbon monoxide come from?

CO gas can come from several sources: gas-fired appliances, charcoal grills, wood-burning furnaces or fireplaces and motor vehicles.

Who is at risk?

Everyone is at risk for CO poisoning. Medical experts believe that unborn babies, infants, children, senior citizens and people with heart or lung problems are at even greater risk for CO poisoning.

WHAT ACTIONS DO I TAKE IF MY CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM GOES OFF?

What you need to do if your carbon monoxide alarm goes off depends on whether anyone is feeling ill or not.

If no one is feeling ill:

1. Silence the alarm.
2. Turn off all appliances and sources of combustion (i.e. furnace and fireplace).
3. Ventilate the house with fresh air by opening doors and windows.
4. Call a qualified professional to investigate the source of the possible CO buildup.

If illness is a factor:

1. Evacuate all occupants immediately.
2. Determine how many occupants are ill and determine their symptoms.
3. Call your local emergency number and when relaying information to the dispatcher, include the number of people feeling ill.
4. Do not re-enter the home without the approval of a fire department representative.
5. Call a qualified professional to repair the source of the CO.

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY FROM CO POISONING

- Install at least one carbon monoxide alarm with an audible warning signal evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), near the sleeping areas and outside individual bedrooms. Carbon monoxide alarms measure levels of CO over time and are designed to sound an alarm before an average, healthy adult would experience symptoms. It is very possible that you may not be experiencing symptoms when you hear the alarm. This does not mean that CO is not present.
- Have a qualified professional check all fuel burning appliances, furnaces, venting and chimney systems at least once a year.
- Never use your range or oven to help heat your home and never use a charcoal grill or hibachi in your home or garage.
- Never keep a car running in a garage. Even if the garage doors are open, normal circulation will not provide enough fresh air to reliably prevent a dangerous buildup of CO.
- When purchasing an existing home, have a qualified technician evaluate the integrity of the heating and cooking systems, as well as the sealed spaces between the garage and house. The presence of a carbon monoxide alarm in your home can save your life in the event of CO buildup.

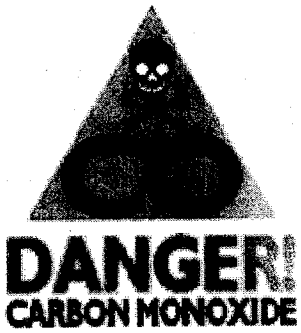
[1] Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

For more information contact:
The U. S. Fire Administration
16825 South Seton Avenue
Emmitsburg, MD 21727
or
Visit the USFA Web site:
www.usfa.fema.gov

Homeland Security

CARBON MONOXIDE EMERGENCY SENDS CALIFORNIA FIREFIGHTERS & MEDICS TO THE HOSPITAL

Tuesday, January 13, 2009



Initially, the call to Santa Clara County dispatch seemed routine enough — a man was in need of medical attention at the Cupertino City Center Apartments on Stevens Creek Boulevard.

When county firefighters and the American Medical Response ambulance crew arrived, they found the man lying unconscious in the locker room of the complex's pool house.

They began trying to revive the man when suddenly the three firefighters, the three paramedics and the person who discovered the initial patient began feeling woozy.

"They didn't see or smell anything unusual, but then, wow, they began working on the patient and started feeling lightheaded and nauseous," said Kendall Pearson, battalion chief for the Santa Clara County Fire Department. "That pretty much clued them in something was wrong in the space."

After clearing the area, San Jose's hazardous materials team found a high level of carbon monoxide that apparently had been leaking from faulty equipment in the locker room.

Ultimately, eight patients, including the firefighters, paramedics and the two residents, went to three different hospitals. The firefighters were treated and released, but the paramedics and the initial patient remained hospitalized Monday evening, Pearson said. The status of the other resident was not known, he said.

"It's kind of bizarre to have something like this happen," Pearson said