

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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CAL FIRE: Don't Let Odorless Gas Kill You!

Install a Carbon Monoxide Alarm in Your Home

Sacramento – With colder temperatures and increased use of heating devices, CAL FIRE is warning of the threat of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. CO is a colorless, odorless gas created when fuels, such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane, burn incompletely. Now is the time to make sure all homes have a working carbon monoxide alarm to protect residents.

“Having a working Carbon monoxide alarm is your family’s number one tool to protect against the silent killer that is CO,” said State Fire Marshal Tonya Hoover, CAL FIRE-Office of the State Fire Marshal. “According to the National Fire Protection Association, most CO incidents occur in homes, making it even more important to ensure your home has an alarm.”

According to the American Medical Association, CO poisoning is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in the United States. Low levels of CO poisoning can cause shortness of breath, mild headaches, nausea, and fainting. CO is called the invisible killer because the gas cannot be seen or smelled. CO alarms are designed to alert residents before exposure to CO causes a health hazard.

Take action to stay safe from CO poisoning:

- Install a CO alarm outside of each sleeping area and on every level of the home.
- Follow the instructions on the package to properly install the CO alarm, and test them once a month.
- If the battery is low, replace it. The alarm will make a different sound if the battery is low.
- If the CO alarm sounds, you must get fresh air. Get everyone out of the house and call 911.

To avoid CO poisoning here are some safety tips to remember:

- Never use your oven, stove, gas or charcoal grills to heat your home; they can create CO. Only use them outside!
- When warming up a vehicle, move it out of the garage. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not blocked as CO can result from the backup.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys inspected by a professional every year.
- During and after a snowstorm, ensure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow build-up as well as debris.
- A generator should be used outdoors only! Use in a well-ventilated area away from windows, doors, and vent openings.

For more information, visit www.fire.ca.gov.

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