



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
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For Immediate Release

November 17, 2008

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Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Warning for Hunters and Others

As the weather turns colder, state health officials urge everyone to guard against carbon monoxide poisoning.

“Carbon monoxide poisoning is more common during the cold weather months in Wisconsin,” said State Health Officer Henry Anderson, M.D. “People may not realize that appliances used by hunters and sportsmen, such as portable generators, heaters and stoves can quickly create dangerous levels in cabins, campers, tents, and hunting and fishing shacks.”

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless gas produced when fuels such as gasoline, kerosene, wood, propane, coal, oil, natural gas and charcoal do not have enough oxygen to burn completely. Poorly functioning or unvented furnaces can cause carbon monoxide poisoning.

Breathing carbon monoxide displaces the oxygen in the blood, which makes people sick. Symptoms of CO poisoning include headache, fatigue, dizziness, shortness of breath, nausea and mental confusion. High levels of exposure may lead to more serious health problems, including loss of consciousness and death. At high levels, carbon monoxide can kill a person in minutes.

“One of the best defenses is a CO detector,” Anderson said. “CO detectors work like smoke alarms to alert you to dangerously high levels of carbon monoxide. Bring a battery powered portable CO detector with you any time you use gas and oil burning appliances away from home. Install CO detectors on every level of your home and near sleeping areas.”

Anderson added that a carbon monoxide detector's alarm should never be ignored. “The alarm may save your life. If it sounds, or if anyone in your house has symptoms, get fresh air immediately and call 911 from a neighbor's house.”

For more information, contact your local health department or visit the Wisconsin Department of Health Services website at <http://dhs.wi.gov/eh/Air/>.

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