



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Health Department Warns of Carbon Monoxide Danger



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BURLINGTON – The Vermont Department of Health is reporting multiple cases of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning in the Northeast Kingdom – and reminding everyone to take precautions to avoid exposure to the potentially fatal colorless and odorless gas.

Power outages across the northern part of the state following the ice storm increases the risk of CO poisoning as generators and heat sources such as propane cooking stoves are more likely to be improperly used indoors.

The Health Department's Office of Public Health Preparedness is working to notify residents in areas impacted by the storm after Emergency Medical Services crews in Newport responded to several calls involving carbon monoxide illnesses.

Early symptoms of CO poisoning can be confused with flu-like symptoms —headache, dizziness and nausea. Breathing carbon monoxide causes these symptoms even in healthy people. It can also cause sleepiness, vision problems (including blurred vision), ringing in the ears, aching arms and legs, irregular breathing, fatigue and confusion. At very high levels, it causes loss of consciousness and death.

Breathing low levels of carbon monoxide over a few hours can be just as dangerous as breathing high levels for a few minutes. If symptoms go away when you leave your home, but come back when you return, there may be a carbon monoxide problem in your home.

Prevent CO poisoning:

- NEVER run a generator indoors. Make sure it's outside, far from where exhaust can vent back in.
- DO NOT use a charcoal grill or hibachi in your home or garage.
- DO NOT use the kitchen gas stove for heating the apartment or the house.
- DO NOT allow snow or ice to pile up outside a gas appliance vent.
- DO NOT allow engines to idle (run) in a garage that is attached to or beneath the house.

For more about preventing carbon monoxide poisoning visit: http://healthvermont.gov/enviro/indoor_air/co.aspx

Visit the Health Department's website at healthvermont.gov for up-to-date news, alerts and health information.

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