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Governor Pritzker Proclaims November Carbon Monoxide Awareness Month in Illinois

OSFM and IDPH urge residents to take precautions to protect themselves and their families from the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning

Springfield, Ill- Governor JB Pritzker has proclaimed November 2026 as Carbon Monoxide Awareness Month in Illinois, encouraging residents to take steps to protect themselves and their families from the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, and tasteless gas that can be deadly. It is produced when fuels such as natural gas, gasoline, propane, wood, and charcoal do not burn completely. According to national estimates, carbon monoxide poisoning results in more than 100,000 emergency room visits and claims more than 1,200 lives each year in the United States.

“As temperatures drop and Illinois residents begin using furnaces, fireplaces, and other heating equipment, it’s important to take steps to protect yourself and your loved ones from the dangers of carbon monoxide,” **said Illinois State Fire Marshal Michele Pankow.** “Make sure carbon monoxide alarms are installed and working properly, have heating equipment inspected and maintained regularly, and never ignore a CO alarm. Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless gas that can be deadly, but taking simple precautions can help prevent tragedies. CO safety matters at every age and every stage of life.”

“As the weather turns colder, now is the perfect time for Illinois residents to ensure their homes have functional carbon monoxide monitors to prevent serious injury or harm,” **said Dr. Sameer Vohra, Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health**. “To protect the health and safety of loved ones, it is important to be aware of the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, including a headache with throbbing temples, shortness of breath, or flush skin. If you or a loved one experiences these symptoms, get fresh air immediately and contact emergency services.”

This year's theme, “A Lifetime of Protection: Every Age. Every Stage. Protected from CO.”, highlights how carbon monoxide risks and safety needs can change throughout a person's life. From pregnancy and infancy to childhood, adulthood, and older adulthood, everyone deserves protection from this potentially deadly gas.

The Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) encourage residents to follow these important carbon monoxide safety tips:

- Install and maintain CO alarms. Make sure carbon monoxide alarms are installed as required by law, test them regularly, and replace batteries or entire alarms according to the manufacturer's instructions and the alarm's expiration date.
- Schedule annual inspections. Have furnaces, fireplaces, chimneys, and other fuel-burning appliances inspected and serviced by qualified professionals.
- Use generators safely. Never operate a generator inside a home, garage, basement, or other enclosed or partially enclosed space. Keep generators outdoors and at least 20 feet away from doors, windows, and vents, following manufacturer instructions.
- Never run vehicles in enclosed spaces. Do not run a vehicle in an attached garage, even with the garage door open.
- Use fuel-burning equipment properly. Never use outdoor grills, camp stoves, or other outdoor fuel-burning devices inside a home or enclosed space.
- Recognize the warning signs. Headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion can be symptoms of CO poisoning. Symptoms may resemble the flu without a fever.

If a carbon monoxide alarm sounds or CO poisoning is suspected, everyone should immediately move outdoors to fresh air and call 911 from a safe location. Do not re-enter the building until emergency responders say it is safe.

Carbon monoxide exposure can be especially dangerous for pregnant individuals, infants, older adults, and people with certain underlying health conditions. Because CO cannot be detected by human senses, functioning alarms and preventive maintenance are essential safeguards.

Governor Pritzker’s Proclamation is attached

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