

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
SERVICES

Secretary Karen E. Timberlake  
1 West Wilson Street  
P.O. Box 7850  
Madison, WI 53707-7850  
Telephone: (608) 266-9622  
FAX: (608) 266-7882



State of Wisconsin  
Governor Jim Doyle

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
TRADE AND CONSUMER  
PROTECTION

Secretary Randy Romanski  
2811 Agriculture Drive  
P.O. Box 8911  
Madison, WI 53708-8911  
Telephone: (608) 224-5012  
FAX: (608) 224-5034

---

**For Immediate Release**

November 15, 2010

Contact: Beth Kaplan, Department of Health Services, (608) 267-3810

Brock Bergey, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, (608) 224-5007

## Officials Warn About Carbon Monoxide Poisoning During Winter

*Use of Detectors in Homes and During Hunting Trips Vital*

State officials are urging people to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning by taking steps both inside the home and during hunting trips this winter, the time of year when nearly half of all accidental carbon monoxide (CO) deaths occur.

Carbon Monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that can be generated by improper ventilation of furnaces, gasoline-powered tools, heaters, car exhaust systems and wood-burning stoves. Breathing the gas displaces the oxygen in the blood and can cause death in minutes at high levels. Symptoms are flu-like and include headache, fatigue, dizziness, shortness of breath, nausea and mental confusion.

People may be familiar with the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning in the home, but may not realize that products used by hunters and outdoors enthusiasts can also create dangerous CO levels. Consumers should never use portable generators, propane or kerosene heaters, unvented furnaces, charcoal or gas grills in an enclosed area – this includes tents, ice fishing shanties, trailers, cabins, RVs, garages and homes.

“Some models of portable heaters have what is called an oxygen depletion sensor, or ODS,” said Janet Jenkins, Administrator of the Division of Trade and Consumer Protection at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. “This sensor is designed to detect the absence of oxygen and automatically shut off an unvented heater. However, consumers should never rely on this safety feature alone.”

“One of the best defenses against CO poisoning in the home and for hunters is a CO detector,” said State Health Officer Henry Anderson, M.D. “These work like smoke alarms to alert you to dangerously high CO levels. Hunters should bring a battery-powered portable CO detector any time they use gas and oil burning appliances away from home. Homeowners should install them on every level of the home and near sleeping areas.”

“Never ignore a CO detector’s alarm because it could save your life,” Anderson said. If an alarm sounds or anyone in the house or hunting cabin has symptoms, he advises getting fresh air immediately and calling 911 from a neighbor’s house or using a cell phone outside the cabin.

“Consumers need to use and maintain CO detectors based on the manufacturers’ recommendations” added Jenkins. “They should be tested every 30 days – keeping in mind most CO detectors average a five-year life span.”

For more information contact your local health department or visit <http://dhs.wi.gov/eh/Air/>.

Product safety inquiries should be directed to the Bureau of Consumer Protection by calling toll-free, 1-800-422-7128. To check for recent recalls on portable generators, heaters, grills and CO detectors visit the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission’s website, <http://www.cpsc.gov/>.

###