

CITY OF BALTIMORE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Baltimore City Health and Fire Departments Urge Attention to Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

BALTIMORE, MD (February 5, 2008)— In response to recent reports of carbon monoxide poisoning in Baltimore, the Baltimore City Health Department and Baltimore City Fire Department released the following guidance:

Carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless gas produced by appliances and other devices that burn gas, petroleum products, wood and other fuels. Carbon monoxide replaces oxygen in your blood — and the consequences can be fatal.

You may not know if your furnace, appliance, or car is producing dangerous levels of carbon monoxide until it is too late. Symptoms of poisoning include dizziness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, confusion, irritability, impaired judgment, and loss of consciousness. Prolonged exposure to carbon monoxide can cause death.

There have been at least 20 deaths in Baltimore City due to accidental exposure to carbon monoxide since 2000. Because there is no mandated reporting of carbon monoxide poisonings in Maryland, we do not have reports of all non-fatal illness due to carbon monoxide.

The Baltimore City Health Department recommends that all residents and businesses using gas, kerosene, oil, or wood for heating, cooking, hot water, or clothes drying, or with attached garages, protect your homes and workplaces with carbon monoxide alarms. To avoid unnecessary deaths, the Health Department recommends that you follow the Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines:

1. “Make sure appliances are installed according to manufacturer's instructions and local building codes. Most appliances should be installed by professionals. Have the heating system (including chimneys and vents) inspected and serviced annually. The inspector should also check chimneys and flues for blockages, corrosion, partial and complete disconnections, and loose connections.
2. Install a CO detector/alarm that meets the requirements of the current UL standard 2034 or the requirements of the IAS 6-96 standard. A carbon monoxide detector/alarm can provide added protection, but is no substitute for proper use and upkeep of appliances that can produce CO. Install a CO detector/alarm in the hallway near every separate

sleeping area of the home. Make sure the detector cannot be covered up by furniture or draperies.

3. Never burn charcoal inside a home, garage, vehicle, or tent.
4. Never use portable fuel-burning camping equipment inside a home, garage, vehicle, or tent.
5. Never leave a car running in an attached garage, even with the garage door open.
6. Never service fuel-burning appliances without proper knowledge, skills, and tools. Always refer to the owner's manual when performing minor adjustments or servicing fuel-burning appliances.
7. Never use gas appliances such as ranges, ovens, or clothes dryers for heating your home.
8. Never operate unvented fuel-burning appliances in any room with closed doors or windows or in any room where people are sleeping.
9. Do not use gasoline-powered tools and engines indoors.”

Carbon monoxide alarms, which can be purchased in local hardware stores for less than \$25.00 are easily installed, and are an important component of a family home safety plan.

For more information refer to <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/466.html> or call Genevieve Birkby at 443-984-2460.

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