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## TAKE PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT CARBON MONOXIDE POISONINGS



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**Tallahassee, Fla.**—The Florida Department of Health reminds Floridians to take precautions to prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. CO is a poisonous gas produced by burning fuels such as gasoline, natural gas, propane, kerosene, charcoal and wood. CO from these sources can build up in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces, such as your home or garage. The risk of illness or death increases with the level of CO in the air and the amount of time exposed.

“Carbon monoxide is invisible, tasteless, odorless and non-irritating, which is why taking precautions and having working CO alarms in your home is critical,” said Interim State Surgeon General Dr. Celeste Philip. “Proper use of generators, portable space heaters and grills can protect you and your family from accidental poisoning.”

Since symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to those of the flu, food poisoning or other illnesses, you may not think CO is the cause. The common signs and symptoms include headache, nausea, weakness, abdominal discomfort/pain, dizziness and confusion. Children, pregnant women and individuals with heart conditions are most vulnerable. Anyone who suspects symptoms of CO poisoning should go outside the home or building immediately and seek prompt medical attention.

### Tips to help prevent CO poisoning:

- Never leave an automobile running in a garage, even with the garage door open. Do not leave the rear window or tailgate of a vehicle open while driving. CO from the exhaust can be pulled inside the car, van, or camper;
- Never use a gas stove or oven to heat the home. Never burn charcoal inside a house, garage, vehicle, or tent. Do not use charcoal in a fireplace;
- Avoid using unvented gas, propane or kerosene heaters in enclosed spaces, especially sleeping areas. Have a licensed contractor inspect the exhaust system of each fuel burning appliance every year, including chimneys, flues, and vents;
- Never use a portable generator or fuel-powered tools indoors or in enclosed or partially-enclosed areas. Always place portable generators outdoors on a dry surface far away from doors, windows, vents and air conditioning equipment that could allow CO to enter. Orient the generator so that it is placed with the exhaust port pointing away from the home; and

- Install battery operated CO alarms or plug-in CO alarms with battery backup inside a home according to manufacturer's installation instructions. CO alarms are also recommended for recreational vehicles (RVs), travel trailers, houseboats and boats with sleeping quarters or cockpits.

For more information about suspected poisoning emergencies, call the Florida Poison Information Center at 1-800-222-1222. To learn more about carbon monoxide poisoning prevention, visit [www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/carbon-monoxide/index.html](http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/carbon-monoxide/index.html) or call the Radon and Indoor Air Program at 1-800-543-8279.

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