



Wyomissing Fire Department  
1259 Penn Ave  
Wyomissing PA 19610

Station – (610) 375-4436, Ext. 0  
Fax – (610) 375-4438

In the year to date there have been a total of 12 persons who have lost their lives resulting from a carbon monoxide emergency. The most recent was November 1, 2012 in Spring Township. This incident was an unfortunate result of the loss of electric from the impacts of Hurricane Sandy to our region.

## **The Dangers of Carbon Monoxide**

Each year in America, more than 150 people die from accidental non-fire related carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning associated with consumer products. These products include faulty, improperly-used or incorrectly-vented fuel-burning appliances such as furnaces, stoves, water heaters and fireplaces, and operating gas powered equipment indoors (vehicles, emergency generators, space heaters, etc.). *Source: Consumer Product Safety Commission*

Carbon Dioxide (CO) is a colorless, tasteless, and odorless gas that is a byproduct of incomplete combustion of fossil fuels (gasoline, kerosene, coal, natural gas, propane or wood).

Signs and symptoms associated with exposure to carbon monoxide include headache, nausea, and drowsiness. Exposure to undetected high levels of carbon monoxide can result in loss of consciousness and ultimately be fatal. Carbon monoxide entering the body will attach itself to the hemoglobin in the blood and not allow for oxygen to be transported throughout the blood stream to vital organs.

Installation of a CO alarm in your home provides an early warning of a carbon monoxide emergency. Alarms should be placed in a centralized location outside of sleeping areas, on each level of the home, and where required by local laws or codes require. Alarm manufacturers supply directions with the alarm which specify height requirements for optimal operation of the alarm. CO alarms are not a permitted substitute for smoke detectors. If you are installing combination CO/Smoke alarms, follow your local requirements or codes for smoke detector installation. If you have any questions about installation please contact the Fire Department.



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Testing and replacing CO alarms should be done in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations. You should test your CO alarm on a monthly basis to ensure it is working properly. You should know the difference of alarm sounds between your CO alarm and your smoke detector, and the difference between an active alarm and a low-battery signal.

If the alarm sounds immediately leave the building to a fresh air location outside and ensure everyone is accounted for. After you have safely exited call 9-1-1 and remain outside in the fresh air environment.

Precautions for preventing a CO emergency are fairly simple. Have all of your fuel burning heating equipment inspected by a certified professional on an annual basis. When using your fireplace open the damper fully before starting the fire. Never use your oven or stove to heat your home. If you need to warm up your vehicle be sure to remove it from the garage and never run a vehicle or fuel powered engine inside, this includes portable generators.

If you have any further comments, questions or concerns please feel free to contact the Wyomissing Fire Department at (610)375-4436 ext. 0 or Fire Commissioner Longenecker at (610)376-7481.