Advisory from the NJ Poison Control Center

# Check Your Carbon Monoxide Detectors Ahead of the Snow Storm



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Carbon Monoxide Gas Can Build Up Quickly Poisoning People and Pets







As a winter storm heads towards New Jersey, the state's poison control center reminds residents about the increased danger of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning during intense winter storms. While preparing for dangerous weather conditions, test carbon monoxide detectors to make sure devices and batteries are working properly.



Breathing in carbon monoxide, often referred to as "the silent killer", can quickly become life-threatening and must be treated as a medical emergency.

If you suspect someone is experiencing symptoms of CO poisoning, it is important to get help as quickly as possible.

The NJ Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222) should be contacted at the first sign of symptoms (similar to common winter illnesses).

If someone is unconscious, not breathing, seizing or hard to wake-up, call 9-1-1.





1-800-222-1222



New Jersey Poison Center As communities around the state brace for heavy wind, rain, snow, ice, and possible power outages, the medical professionals at the NJ Poison Control Center are available to provide help and information before, during, and after the storm.



Bruce Ruck Managing Director <u>New Jersey Poison Control Center</u> <u>Rutgers New Jersey Medical School</u>



Each winter the poison center sees an uptick in calls for exposure and/or injury to a wide range of substances related to dangerous weather, especially carbon monoxide.





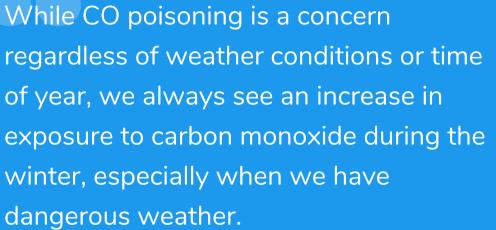
Carbon monoxide is a dangerous, poisonous gas that causes mild to severe illness to hundreds of people in New Jersey each year.

Severe illness requires hospitalization and can result in death. Carbon monoxide is produced by portable generators, stoves, dryers, furnaces, and other fuel burning appliances and equipment, including space heaters and cars.

The gas gives <u>no warning</u>, meaning you can't see it, smell it, hear it, or taste it.

The only way to detect CO in your living area is to have properly working carbon monoxide detectors.

1-800-222-1222 New Jersey Poison Center



#### **Bruce Ruck**

Using the stove to heat the house, charging phones in running cars in enclosed/poorly ventilated spaces or surrounded by snow, and using any gaspowered appliances/equipment like generators or space heaters can cause dangerous levels of carbon monoxide to build up very quickly.





Recognize the signs and symptoms of CO poisoning and act quickly!

Early symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to symptoms of the common cold, flu, strep throat, and COVID-19. Symptoms can include headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion.

At high levels, CO poisoning causes unconsciousness (coma) and death.

Stopping carbon monoxide gas from building up inside your living space or car is the best way to prevent dangerous health effects.

There is no safe level of carbon monoxide, anyone (including pets) exposed to this poisonous gas can experience life-threatening health effects.



### If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, get help immediately



If someone is unconscious or unresponsive, get them out of the house and call 9-1-1 immediately.



Leave the house or building right away. Do not waste time opening windows. This will delay your escape and cause you to breathe in even more dangerous fumes.



Contact your local fire department or energy provider.





Call the NJ Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 for immediate treatment advice. Do not waste time looking for information on the internet about carbon monoxide poisoning. Call the poison center for fast, free, and accurate information.



### **Outdoor** safety tips to help reduce your risk of carbon monoxide exposure during snow storms

Gas generators should only be used outside. Keep portable generators more than 20 feet from both your home and your neighbors' homes. This includes keeping generators away from doors, windows, and vents. <u>Generator Safety Tips</u>

Clear snow blocking/around your heating system, dryer, and other appliance vents, intakes, and exhausts.

Make sure flues are open before starting a fire in your fireplace.



Use pressure washers, grills, camp stoves, or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoalburning devices outdoors only. It is never safe to use them inside your home, basement, garage, carport, camper, boat cabin, or tent.

Do not idle a vehicle in a snowbank. Before starting the vehicle, clear the tailpipe and surrounding area to prevent exhaust fumes from entering the car.





## Indoor safety tips to help reduce your risk of carbon monoxide exposure during snow storms

Carbon monoxide detectors should be on every level of your home, including near sleeping areas.

Check to make sure your CO detectors are working. If detectors are old or not working properly, replace them.

Keeping a car running in a garage is extremely dangerous. Carbon monoxide gas can quickly build up inside the garage even with the garage door open.

You must not use your stove or oven to heat your living space. Doing so can cause dangerous levels of carbon monoxide gas to build up inside your home or apartment.



Be careful with "remote start" engines which may turn on without you knowing it.



# 24/7 Get Free Medical Help 1-800-222-1222

Medical specialists are available to provide information, answer questions, and provide emergency support 24 hours a day

Anyone can call for medical help – children, teens, and adults

### **NJ Poison Control Center**

is a medical resource for both the public and healthcare providers. If you think someone was exposed to carbon monoxide, contact your local poison control center immediately.

Call the NJ Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 or <u>Chat Here</u> If someone is not breathing, hard to wake up, or having a seizure, call 9-1-1