

Carbon Monoxide Safety



Carbon monoxide (CO) is a gas. It has no odor. CO gas is poisonous. It can make a person feel sick and can be deadly. In the home, heating and cooking devices that burn fuel can be sources of carbon monoxide.

CO ALARMS

- ››› CO alarms should be installed outside each sleeping area. Install alarms on every level of the home. It is best to use interconnected alarms. When one sounds, all CO alarms in the home sound.
- ››› Follow the instructions on the package to properly install the CO alarm.
- ››› Test CO alarms at least once a month.
- ››› Replace CO alarms according to the instructions on the package.
- ››› Know the sounds the CO alarm makes. It will sound if CO is detected. It will make a different sound if the battery is low or if it is time to get a new CO alarm.
- ››› If the battery is low, replace it.
- ››› If the CO alarm sounds, you must get fresh air. Move outdoors, by an open window or near an open door. Make sure everyone in the home gets to fresh air. Call the fire department from a fresh air location. Stay there until help arrives.

PREVENT CO POISONING

- ››› When warming a vehicle, move it out of the garage. Do not run a fueled engine indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not blocked. Clear snow away.
- ››› During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove and fireplace are clear of snow build-up.
- ››› Clear all debris from dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace vents.
- ››› A generator should be used outdoors. Use in a well-ventilated location away from windows, doors, and vent openings.
- ››› Gas or charcoal grills can produce CO. Only use them outside.
- ››› Have heating equipment and chimneys inspected by a professional every year before cold weather sets in.
- ››› Open the damper when using a fireplace for adequate ventilation.
- ››› Never use your oven or stove to heat your home.

FACT!

CO is called the invisible killer because the gas cannot be seen or smelled. Take action to stay safe from CO poisoning.

Ocean Springs Fire Department

David Wicker, (228)230-1845



Your Source for SAFETY Information

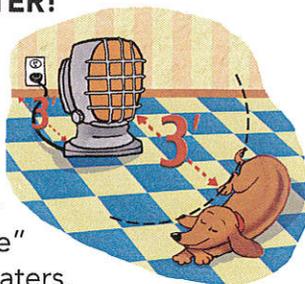
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Heating Safety

There is something about the winter months and curling up with a good book by the fireplace. But did you know that heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths? With a few simple safety tips and precautions you can prevent most heating fires from happening.

BE WARM AND SAFE THIS WINTER!

- »» Keep anything that can burn at least three-feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- »» Have a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- »» Never use your oven to heat your home.
- »» Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer's instructions.
- »» Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.
- »» Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- »» Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.
- »» Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- »» Test smoke alarms monthly.



Heating Equipment Smarts

Install wood burning stoves following manufacturer's instructions or have a professional do the installation. All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

Install and maintain CO alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning. If you **smell** gas in your gas heater, do not light the appliance. Leave the home immediately and call your local fire department or gas company.



FACT

Half of home heating fires are reported during the months of **December, January, and February.**



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www.nfpa.org/education

Smoke Alarms



for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Smoke alarms save lives. However, people who are deaf or hard of hearing may not be able to depend on the traditional smoke alarm to alert them to a fire.

SAFETY TIPS

- »» Smoke alarms and alert devices, called accessories, are available for people who are deaf. Strobe lights throughout the home are activated by smoke alarms and alert people who are deaf to fire conditions. When people who are deaf are asleep, a high intensity strobe light is required along with a pillow or bed shaker to wake them up and alert them to fire conditions so they can escape. Currently this equipment is activated by the sound of a standard smoke alarm.
- »» Smoke alarm alert devices, called accessories, are available for people who are hard of hearing. These accessories produce a loud, mixed low-pitched sound. This equipment is activated by the sound of the smoke alarm and is usually installed next to the bed. People who are deaf may find that a pillow or bed shaker is also helpful to wake them up.
- »» Recent research has shown that a loud, mixed low-pitched sound is more effective for waking people of all ages than the loud high-pitched sound of a traditional smoke alarm. As people age, their ability to hear high-pitched sounds decreases.
- »» Research the available products and select one that best meets your individual needs.

WHERE TO FIND EQUIPMENT

Smoke alarms with built in or separate strobe lights can be purchased through home improvement store websites or by searching the internet for "strobe light smoke alarms." BRK/First Alert, Gentex and Kidde brands offer this type of smoke alarm. Smoke alarm accessories such as bed/pillow shakers, transmitters and receivers are available through lifetonesafety.com, safeawake.com and silentcall.com. Make sure any smoke alarm or accessory device you use has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.

FACTS

- ! People with a hearing disability may not even hear a smoke alarm.
- ! Home fire sprinklers increase the chances of surviving a fire.

AND DON'T FORGET...
All smoke alarms should be tested at least once a month using the test button.



www.nfpa.org/disabilities
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Smoke Alarms

at Home

SMOKE ALARMS ARE A KEY PART of a home fire escape plan. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast. Working smoke alarms give you early warning so you can get outside quickly.

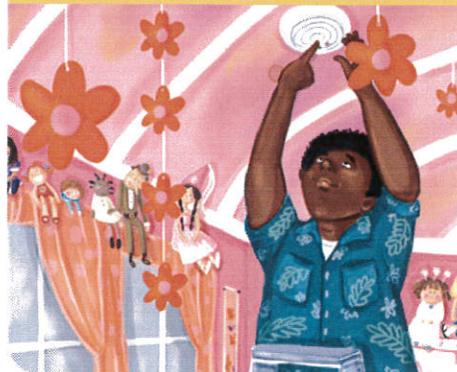


SAFETY TIPS

- » Install smoke alarms inside and outside each bedroom and sleeping area. Install alarms on every level of the home. Install alarms in the basement.
- » Large homes may need extra smoke alarms.
- » It is best to use interconnected smoke alarms. When one smoke alarm sounds they all sound.
- » Test all smoke alarms at least once a month. Press the test button to be sure the alarm is working.
- » There are two kinds of alarms. Ionization smoke alarms are quicker to warn about flaming fires. Photoelectric alarms are quicker to warn about smoldering fires. It is best to use both types of alarms in the home.
- » A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall. Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen to reduce false alarms. They should be at least 10 feet (3 meters) from the stove.
- » People who are hard-of-hearing or deaf can use special alarms. These alarms have strobe lights and bed shakers.
- » Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.

FACTS

- ! Smoke alarms should be installed inside every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level. Smoke alarms should be connected so when one sounds, they all sound. Most homes do not have this level of protection.
- ! Roughly 3 out of 5 fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or the alarms are not working.



Ocean Springs Fire Department

David Wicker, (228)230-1845

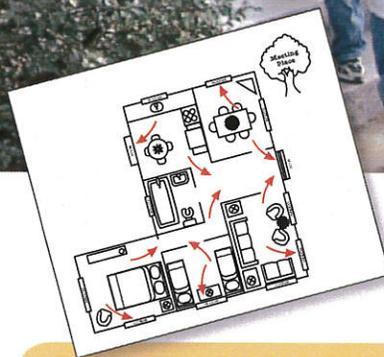


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Escape Planning

Plan Ahead! If a fire breaks out in your home, you may have only a few minutes to get out safely once the smoke alarm sounds. Everyone needs to know what to do and where to go if there is a fire.



SAFETY TIPS

- »» MAKE a home escape plan. Draw a map of your home showing all doors and windows. Discuss the plan with everyone in your home.
- »» KNOW at least two ways out of every room, if possible. Make sure all doors and windows leading outside open easily.
- »» HAVE an outside meeting place (like a tree, light pole or mailbox) a safe distance from the home where everyone should meet.
- »» PRACTICE your home fire drill at night and during the day with everyone in your home, twice a year.
- »» PRACTICE using different ways out.
- »» TEACH children how to escape on their own in case you can't help them.
- »» CLOSE doors behind you as you leave.

IF THE ALARM SOUNDS...

- »» If the smoke alarm sounds, **GET OUT AND STAY OUT**. Never go back inside for people or pets.
- »» If you have to escape through smoke, **GET LOW AND GO** under the smoke to your way out.
- »» CALL the fire department from outside your home.

FACTS

- ! According to an NFPA survey, only **one of every three** American households have actually developed and practiced a home fire escape plan.
- ! While **71%** of Americans have an escape plan in case of a fire, only **47%** of those have practiced it.
- ! **One-third** of American households who made an estimate thought they would have at least 6 minutes before a fire in their home would become life-threatening. The time available is often less. And only **8%** said their first thought on hearing a smoke alarm would be to get out!

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Your Source for **SAFETY** Information

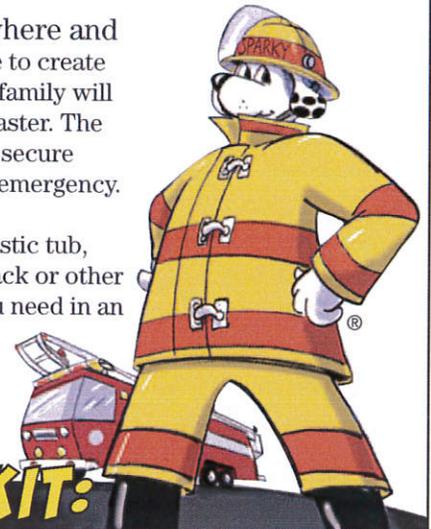
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GET READY!

Disasters can happen anywhere and at any time. By taking the time to create an emergency supplies kit, your family will be prepared in the event of a disaster. The kit also helps children feel more secure knowing it is there in case of an emergency.

The supplies can be kept in a plastic tub, small suitcase, trash can, backpack or other container. To learn what else you need in an emergency supplies kit, go to www.ready.gov.



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EMERGENCY SUPPLIES KIT:

- Water – one gallon per person per day for drinking and sanitation — store 3-day supply
- Ready-to-eat food, canned juices, comfort/stress foods — at least a 3-day supply
- Battery-powered or hand-cranked radio and a NOAA weather radio, and extra batteries for both
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Non-prescription drugs such as pain reliever, anti-diarrhea medication, antacid, laxative
- Prescription medications, contact lenses and supplies, denture needs
- Whistle to signal for help
- Infant formula and diapers, if you have an infant
- Water and pet food if you have pets
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Dust mask or cotton t-shirt to filter the air
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food
- Aluminum foil
- A jacket or coat, hat and gloves
- A complete change of clothing including long pants, long sleeve shirt, and sturdy shoes stored in a waterproof container.
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Rain gear
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- Cash or traveler's checks, change
- Paper towels
- Tent
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Personal hygiene items
- Soap
- Disinfectant and household chlorine bleach
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container. Remember to include emergency contact numbers.
- Passport, bank account numbers, credit card account numbers and companies
- Books, games puzzles, portable music device

NOTE: Replace food every six months. Re-think your kit and family needs once a year. Replace batteries and update clothes, etc.

My Personal Pack Checklist

Have children create their personal pack. Have them include things like their favorite book or stuffed animal. These familiar things will help keep them comfortable during an emergency.

- ✓ Change of clothes
- ✓ Blanket
- ✓ Books
- ✓ Favorite toy
- ✓ Paper, pencils and crayons



HOARDING: *Issues for the Fire Service*

Many fire departments are experiencing serious fires, injuries, and deaths as the result of compulsive hoarding behavior. The excessive accumulation of materials in homes poses a significant threat to firefighters fighting fires and responding to other emergencies in these homes and to residents and neighbors.

Often, the local fire department will be contacted to help deal with this serious issue. Since studies suggest that between three and five percent of the population are compulsive hoarders, fire departments must become familiar with this issue and how to effectively handle it.

What is hoarding?

- Collecting or keeping large amounts of various items in the home due to strong urges to save them or distress experienced when discarding them.
- Many rooms in the home are so filled with possessions that residents can no longer use the rooms as designed.
- The home is so overloaded with things that everyday living is compromised.



Why do people become hoarders?

Hoarding is a mental disorder that can be genetic in nature, triggered by traumatic events, or a symptom of another disorder, such as depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, or dementia. Studies have found that hoarding usually begins in early adolescence and gets worse as a person ages. It is more common among older adults.

Why is hoarding an issue for the fire service?

- Hoarding can be a fire hazard. Many occupants die in fires in these homes. Often, blocked exits prevent escape from the home. In addition, many people who are hoarding are injured when they trip over things or when materials fall on them.
- Responding firefighters can be put at risk due to obstructed exits, falling objects, and excessive fire loading that can lead to collapse. Hoarding makes fighting fires and searching for occupants far more difficult.
- Those living adjacent to an occupied structure can be quickly affected when a fire occurs, due to excessive smoke and fire conditions.

In some communities, officials are asking landlords and property owners to inform the local fire service or building commissioner or inspector when they become aware of a hoarding situation that poses a fire safety risk to the occupant or neighbors.

What can the fire service do?

The fire service may become aware of a hoarding situation through emergency response or notification by another agency, family member, or neighbor. Knowing how to talk to the person who is hoarding and how to work with other professional groups and organizations to effectively deal with the occupant and the hoarding behavior is important. Keep in mind that people with compulsive hoarding behavior are intelligent and care deeply about their possessions. The following suggestions have been adapted from *The Hoarding Handbook: A Guide for Human Service Professionals* (Oxford University Press).

When talking to someone who is hoarding:

- Be respectful and show concern for the person's safety
- Match the language of the person. If the person talks about his "collection" or her "things", use that language. Avoid using derogatory terms, such as "junk", "trash", or "hoarding".
- Focus on safety issues, such as fires, fall hazards, and avalanche conditions. Note possible ignition sources or trip hazards and try to build support for addressing these issues instead of insisting on an immediate and overwhelming cleanup.
- Show empathy by indicating that while you understand that your presence is upsetting for the person, some kind of change is necessary.

Responding firefighters can be put at risk due to obstructed exits, falling objects, and excessive fire loading that can lead to collapse.



Develop or join a Hoarding Task Force.

Hoarding Task Forces are developing all around the country. Your community may already have one. If not, begin a conversation with other agencies impacted by hoarding and discuss collaborating with them on future cases. Task Forces are usually established by service providers to gain knowledge about and insight into the problem of hoarding behavior, to share case information, and to develop intervention strategies. Some even serve as the intervention/response mechanism for hoarding situations.

Hoarding Task Forces are often made up of mental health providers, building representatives, community service providers, faith based organizations, the fire service, public health representatives, family members, and many others. Coordinated and collaborative interventions are more likely to bring about positive outcomes than individual agencies working alone or in conflict. Teamwork is imperative and mental health intervention is vital to effectively change this often dangerous behavior.



Your Source for Safety Information

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