



MEDFORD BUREAU OF FIRE PREVENTION

A Division of the Medford Fire Department

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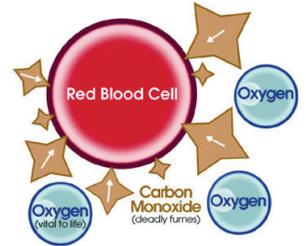
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Press Release

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According to KGW.com, News Channel 8 in Portland, a husband was found dead inside his Southeast Portland home and his wife was near death when firefighters forced their way inside Wednesday night. Investigators said it appeared that the couple had turned on a natural gas heater for warmth and sealed windows and doors shut to keep out the cold. Problem was, they didn't know that their portable heater was not vented properly and the odorless, deadly gas leaked into their home.



According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), each year more than 400 Americans die from unintentional carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, more than 20,000 visit the emergency room and more than 4,000 are hospitalized due to CO poisoning. Fatality is highest among Americans 65 and older.

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death. Symptoms of CO poisoning include headaches, dizziness, fatigue/weakness, sleepiness and mental confusion, nausea/vomiting, irregular breathing, chest pain, faintness, or loss of consciousness. If you feel these symptoms, get fresh air immediately. Consult a physician if the symptoms are mild. If the symptoms are severe, call 911. Don't ignore the symptoms, especially if more than one person is feeling them.

Anytime fueled appliances (water heaters, furnaces, clothes dryers, range/stove, fireplaces, wood stoves, etc.) are used in the house, there is potential for CO buildup if the appliances are not properly vented to the outside.

What can you do to prevent this from happening in your home?

- Install a CO detector in your home
- Never use portable fueled/unvented heaters in your home or recreational vehicle. These will cause a CO buildup and may also deplete the oxygen to dangerously low levels.
- Never use a gas oven to heat your home
- Never use charcoal or propane fueled barbeques indoors
- Never idle the car in the garage for extended periods of time or with the garage door closed
- Never use a generator in your home
- Have your chimney checked or cleaned every year. Chimneys blocked by debris can cause CO to build up inside your home or cabin.
- Have your fuel-fired appliances inspected by a trained technician for proper venting

Sources:

<http://www.kgw.com/news/local/Husband-dies-wife-in-critical-from-carbon-monoxide-78963637.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/co/faqs.htm>

<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/coftsht.html>

http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/citizens/all_citizens/co/fswy17.shtm

For more information, contact the Fire Marshal Greg Kleinberg at 774-2317.

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