

Apartment

SAFETY NOTES

SPOKANE FIRE DEPARTMENT

JANUARY 2010

Welcome to our first e- newsletter!

If you know additional persons who would be interested in seasonal fire safety tips, emergency response or code concerns, they can sign up for this newsletter by contacting Jan Doherty at jdoherty@spokanefire.org or by calling 625-7058.

We are a “work in progress” and will include additional links for you as soon as possible.

*“Service and Protection
through Excellence”*



Carbon Monoxide Concerns

Winter months raise the hazard level of carbon monoxide poisoning and Spokane Fire Department responded to two serious events in December. Symptoms of CO poisoning include dizziness, fatigue, headaches, nausea and irregular breathing. Carbon monoxide poisoning causes about 500 deaths, 4,000 hospitalizations and 20,000 visits to the emergency room each year in the United States.

CO poisoning first affects those who are more physically vulnerable: infants, young children, pregnant women, persons with heart conditions and the elderly.

Long-term effects of CO poisoning include memory loss, continuing lung and heart problems, and impaired motor skills.

Spokane Fire Department recommends that every household equipped with any type of fuel-burning devices (e.g. furnace, water heater, gas stove, or fireplace) install at least one carbon monoxide detector. It is best if the devices have LED windows that show the actual parts per million of carbon monoxide to oxygen when the alarm sounds.

Washington State will require carbon monoxide alarms in new residential buildings beginning 7/1/10 and in existing rental occupancies by 7/1/ 2011. WAC 51-51-0315

CO : The Silent Killer

Carbon monoxide poisoning is often referred to as "the silent killer" because carbon monoxide cannot be seen, tasted or smelled.

CHERYL BURT TESTIFIES BEFORE CONGRESS



In Congressional testimony on December 17, 2009, Cheryl Burt of Rochester MN relayed the devastating effects of carbon monoxide poisoning on her family.

Fourteen years ago, her two preschoolers died in their sleep as the mother tried to tend to them and a third son, thinking they were suffering from the flu. In fact, a malfunctioning furnace had vented dangerous levels of CO throughout the home for several days. A working carbon monoxide detector would have sounded the alarm early in this process and saved the family. By coincidence, Ms. Burt had debated whether to buy a carbon monoxide detector or another toy for Christmas that year. She said at the hearing that

"I opted to buy my son another toy truck instead. Now I have the truck, but I don't have my son."

With a New Year of good

resolutions, we have the opportunity to increase the level of safety for family, friends and tenants by installing carbon monoxide detectors.

Safety Tip

If the CO alarm sounds, check to see if anyone is feeling sick.

Get everyone outside to fresh air and then call 9-1-1 for a fire department response

CO Questions & Answers

Q: Are dual-sensor smoke detector / CO alarms the best investment?

A: Not generally. It's more difficult for tenants to distinguish between the smoke and CO alarms in the middle of the night and to quickly know how to respond

Q: Where is the best placement for CO alarms?

A: Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for placement. Typically they are installed in outlets just above floor level either inside or outside bedrooms.

Q: What are some carbon monoxide poisoning prevention tips?

A: Have fuel-burning appliances such as gas or oil furnaces and fireplaces regularly inspected by trained professionals.

Inspect all flues to make sure they are not blocked or damaged (particularly by bird nests).

Warn tenants not to start cars, lawn mowers or snow blowers in closed garages.

Alert tenants, especially those coming from warmer climates or who have limited English-speaking ability, that they CANNOT use an oven or barbecue to heat the living space.

Recognize potential CO problems: decreased hot water supply, furnace running more than usual but not heating home, soot on appliances.

Select carbon monoxide detectors that have electronic read-out screens showing the parts per million CO to air. Teach tenants how to read the detector and how to respond to an alarm.