



PARTNERING WITH TOWNSHIPS

TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS OF ILLINOIS RISK MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION **RISK REMINDER**

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

During the winter months, it is important to be aware of the potential danger of exposure to carbon monoxide. This is true at home, or in a municipal workplace setting such as the Town Hall, or Equipment Storage Facility. Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous and odorless gas that cannot be seen or smelled and that can kill a person in minutes. It is produced by the incomplete burning of solid, liquid, and gaseous fuels. Carbon monoxide poisons the body when breathed in by displacing the oxygen in the blood and starving the vital organs such as the brain and heart of oxygen. This leads to asphyxiation. The initial symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to the flu (but without fever). They include:

- Headache
- Fatigue
- Shortness of Breath
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Confusion



The following precautions can be taken in order to help prevent carbon monoxide poisoning both in and around the home and workplace:

- Install a CO detector in your home or municipal building – for your home, in order to comply with the 2007 Carbon Monoxide Alarm Law, at least one CO detector must be installed within 15 feet of every room used for sleeping purposes.
- At the beginning of every heating season, have a trained professional check your heating system and also check chimney flues and vents for any blockages.
- Do not leave a car engine running in a garage area even if the garage door is open; fumes can build up quickly and contaminate the air in the garage, and living area of your home.
- Know the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. If you suspect CO poisoning, get outside to fresh air immediately, and then call 911.

There are also precautions for employers to help safeguard employees against the dangers of CO poisoning. They are as follows:

- Ensure that there is a fully functional and regularly checked ventilation system to prevent CO contamination in areas within the workplace such as public works garages.
- Ensure that all appropriate equipment is checked regularly and by a certified professional to ensure safe and proper functioning.
- Vehicular use should be carefully managed in garages adjacent to buildings. Additional ventilation can be used as a temporary measure when high levels of CO are expected for short periods of time.
- Never use gasoline-powered equipment indoors. “Adequate ventilation” is required when using gasoline-powered equipment. Because it can be difficult to determine how much ventilation is adequate, you should always use this kind of equipment outdoors.
- Make sure that employees are trained on the dangers, causes, effects and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, and encourage them to report any violations, risks, or symptoms.

For more information, contact your Loss Control Consultant at (888) 562-7861

CLAIM REPORTING HOTLINE (844) 562-2720 | Available 24/7