

Beware of carbon monoxide

Written by Dan, Trudy and Becca Else, Gothenburg
Thursday, 13 January 2011 15:11 -

Our community is very lucky to have dedicated volunteer emergency personnel and police officers. If you know a volunteer fireman please express your appreciation for the time they give.

Our carbon monoxide alarm went off about 1:30 a.m. Monday morning. The police and six volunteer firemen quickly responded in those wee, cold hours and spent time making sure our family was safe and secure. After the gas company checked our house, it was determined that our carbon monoxide detector was malfunctioning.

Please check your fire alarms and carbon monoxide detectors and make sure they are working. The gas company employee told us that the plug in detectors need replacing every 3-5 years and of course those with batteries need checked often.

The following information is from the Nebraska Regional Poison Center. Prevention is best treatment for carbon monoxide poisonings.

Each year, carbon monoxide poisoning kills nearly 500 people nationwide and sends over 15,000 to the emergency room. The Centers for Disease Control ranked Nebraska as the state with the highest reliable mortality rate from carbon monoxide. In 2010, the Nebraska Regional Poison Center received 292 calls concerning carbon monoxide. But this figure can be misleading because carbon monoxide poisoning is often under-reported. It is imperative that the citizens of Nebraska understand the dangers, the symptoms and how to prevent poisoning from carbon monoxide.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include sleepiness, headache, dizziness, blurred vision, nausea, shortness of breath and convulsions. The first step in treating carbon monoxide poisoning is getting the victim to fresh air. Then seek medical attention immediately.

Carbon monoxide is a gas produced when fuels burn incompletely. It has no color, taste or smell. The major causes of carbon monoxide poisoning include:

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Using heating equipment that is in poor repair

Lack of ventilation in a car

Using a charcoal grill indoors

Using unvented space heaters

The Nebraska Regional Poison Center offers the following suggestions to help prevent carbon monoxide poisoning:

Inspect all fuel-burning equipment yearly.

Vent fuel-burning heaters to the outside.

Do not use a gas range or an oven for heating a room.

Never use a charcoal grill or hibachi inside.

Install carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home.

Never leave a car running in an attached garage, even with the garage door open.

Have the vehicle muffler and tailpipes checked regularly.

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The Nebraska Regional Poison Center offers tips on carbon monoxide poisoning prevention as a free community service. If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning or if you have any questions, contact the Nebraska Regional Poison Center toll-free at 1-800-222-1222.

Thank you to police officer Joe Humphrey and the volunteer fireman who responded to our alarm. You had a very busy week helping our community and your dedication and time are truly appreciated.