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Threat of “Silent Killer”- Carbon Monoxide Poisoning- Remains Strong

Presence of carbon monoxide in the home often goes undetected

(Chicago) **October 24, 2013** – With colder than average temperatures this fall, the Illinois Poison Center (IPC) is encouraging the public to be mindful of potential sources of carbon monoxide (CO), frequently called the “silent killer” because it cannot be seen, smelled or tasted..

“As we enter the cold weather months, the incidence of carbon monoxide exposures increases,” said Dr. Michael Wahl, IPC Medical Director. “This increase is primarily due to faulty or malfunctioning heaters and furnaces, particularly gas furnaces.”

Sources that release carbon monoxide include oil, wood and gas furnaces and heaters, gas space heaters, charcoal grills, lanterns, gasoline-powered vehicles such as snow blowers, and gas stoves and dryers. Carbon monoxide levels can increase in the home when these products are used in an enclosed space or are improperly vented to the outside.

Carbon monoxide poisoning may result in flu-like symptoms including headaches, nausea, vomiting and dizziness. Severe poisonings may cause convulsions, unconsciousness, brain damage and even death. Carbon monoxide poisoning usually occurs slowly over a period of several hours; however, at very high concentrations, carbon monoxide can kill in minutes.

The IPC recommends installing carbon monoxide detectors on each floor of your home and to have furnaces and other heating equipment inspected annually by professionals. For more information about the carbon monoxide poisoning and prevention, please visit the [IPC's web site](#).

If you believe you or someone you know is a victim of carbon monoxide poisoning, seek fresh air immediately. Once you or the victim is out of immediate danger, call the IPC at 1-800-222-1222 to receive treatment advice.

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The Illinois Poison Center is a non-profit health service that provides the people of Illinois with comprehensive and trusted information and treatment advice on potentially harmful substances via a free, confidential 24-hour hotline staffed by specially trained doctors, nurses and pharmacists.