

OCTOBER 29, 2020

CARBON MONOXIDE AWARENESS WEEK: PREVENT CARBON MONOXIDE BUILDUP IN YOUR HOME

British Columbia's annual Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week runs from Nov. 1 to 7 this year, and the Campbell River Fire Department is reminding you to prevent this dangerous gas from building up in your home by properly maintaining all fuel-burning appliances and installing carbon monoxide alarms.

"Too many people in B.C. die, or become seriously ill, because of carbon monoxide poisoning," says fire chief Thomas Doherty. "This is entirely preventable, and we want to make sure everyone stays safe and healthy."

The Campbell River Fire Department also reminds you to install carbon monoxide alarms in your home if you have an attached garage, a wood or gas fireplace, or any other fuel-burning appliance, such as furnaces, hot water heaters or dryers. It's important to never use barbeques, portable generators or portable fuel-burning heaters inside the home or garage, even if the garage doors are open. Only use them outside, away from all doors, windows, vents, and other building openings.

"You should install a working carbon monoxide alarm on every level of your home and next to each sleeping area," adds Doherty. "Make sure to test and clean your carbon monoxide alarms regularly, and replace them according to manufacturer's instructions."

What is carbon monoxide?

- Known as the "silent killer" because it is an invisible, tasteless and odourless gas that can be deadly, carbon monoxide is NOT natural gas. Natural gas has a harmless chemical called mercaptan added to it to make it smell like rotten eggs.
- Carbon monoxide is produced when fuels such as propane, gasoline, natural gas, heating oil or wood do not burn completely in fuel-burning appliances and devices.
- Carbon monoxide inhibits the blood's capacity to carry oxygen and can cause health problems before you even notice that it's present.
- At low levels, effects include flu-like symptoms, such as tiredness, headaches, shortness of breath and impaired motor functions.
- At high levels, or if you are exposed to low levels for long periods of time, you can experience dizziness, chest pain, poor vision and difficulty thinking.
- At very high levels, it can cause convulsions, coma and death.

COVID-19

Please note: We have new procedures in place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

We are gradually – carefully – resuming in-person services and limited public access to City facilities. For the most recent information on City services, please see our website (campbellriver.ca). Reach us with general inquiries by email (info@campbellriver.ca) or telephone **250-286-5700**.

Prevent carbon monoxide buildup in your home

- Ensure fuel-burning appliances, chimneys and vents are properly maintained, as well as cleaned and inspected annually. Visit www.technicalsaftybc.ca to find a licensed contractor near you.
- Check that all outside appliance vents are not blocked.
- Ensure all portable fuel-burning heaters are vented properly, according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Never use the stove or oven to heat your home.
- Open a chimney flue before using a fireplace for adequate ventilation.
- Never run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor inside a garage, even if the garage doors are open. Always remove a vehicle from the garage immediately after starting it.

Know the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning

- Exposure to carbon monoxide can cause flu-like symptoms such as headaches, nausea, dizziness, as well as confusion, drowsiness, loss of consciousness and death.
- If your alarm sounds and you or other occupants are suffering from symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, get everyone out of the home immediately. Then call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number from outside.
- If your alarm sounds and no one is suffering from symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, check to see if the alarm battery needs replacing, or if the alarm date indicates it has reached its end of service before calling 9-1-1.

Know the sound of your carbon monoxide alarm

- Your carbon monoxide alarm and your smoke alarm do not sound the same. Test BOTH alarms monthly and make sure everyone in your home knows the difference between the two alarm sounds.
- Don't be confused by the sound of your carbon monoxide alarm's low-battery warning. Follow the manufacturer's instructions so you know the difference between the low-battery warning, the end of service warning, and the alarm alerting you to the carbon monoxide in your home.

If you have any questions, please contact the Campbell River Fire Department at 250-286-6266.

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Contact: Thomas Doherty, Fire Chief

250-286-6266

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