



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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‘Fall back’ while checking your carbon monoxide detectors, Kenosha County Division of Health advises

As temperatures continue to drop and Daylight Saving Time comes to an end this weekend, the Kenosha County Division of Health is urging people to take action to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

When you turn back your clocks on Saturday night, it’s a good time to put new batteries in your carbon monoxide detectors, advises Mark Melotik, the Division of Health’s environmental health manager.

“We’ve already had a taste of winter, and it’s only going to continue to get colder,” Melotik said. “Furnaces will be running more frequently, which makes carbon monoxide poisonings more prevalent. Now is a great time to make sure your heating sources and carbon monoxide detectors are working properly.”

On average, carbon monoxide poisoning sends about 500 Wisconsinites to the emergency room each year, according to data from the Wisconsin Environmental Public Health Tracking Program. These trips to the ER for carbon monoxide poisoning are preventable when people are prepared.

To protect yourself and your family from carbon monoxide, follow these safety tips:

- **Make sure you have working carbon monoxide detectors.** All homes and duplexes in Wisconsin are required to have detectors on every level, including the basement, but not the attic or storage areas. Detectors can be purchased at most hardware stores for \$20-50. The beginning and end of Daylight Saving Time is a good time each year to replace the batteries in your detector and push the “Test”

button to be sure it's working properly. Replace your detector every five years or according to manufacturer's instructions.

- **Have your furnace or wood-burning stove inspected annually.** Hire a professional to make sure it is functionally sound and vents properly outside the home.
- **Never run a gasoline or propane heater or a grill (gas or charcoal) inside your home or garage.** Any heating system that burns fuel produces carbon monoxide. Use a battery-powered detector where you have fuel burning devices but no electric outlets, such as in tents, cabins, and RVs.
- **Generators should be run at a safe distance (at least 20 feet) from the home.** Never run a generator in the home or garage, or right next to windows or doors.
- **Never run a car in an enclosed space.** Even with a door or window open, carbon monoxide levels can still build up to an unsafe level.

At high levels, carbon monoxide can cause death within minutes. Symptoms of overexposure to carbon monoxide include headache, fatigue, dizziness, shortness of breath, nausea, and confusion. If you think you may be experiencing carbon monoxide poisoning, or your detector sounds an alarm, head outside immediately for fresh air and call 911.

Visit the Wisconsin Department of Health Services website, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/air/co.htm>, for more information about carbon monoxide poisoning, and learn more about Kenosha County Environmental Health Services at <http://www.kenoshacounty.org/332/Environmental-Health-Services>. For more information about Division of Health programs and services, follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/KenoshaCountyHealth.

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