



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Health Services

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Jim Doyle, Governor  
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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Carbon Monoxide Threat Increases In Winter**

*Take Precautions to Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning*

As bitterly cold temperatures are forecast for Wisconsin, state health officials remind everyone to take winter safety precautions and to be aware of the dangers of carbon monoxide.

“Carbon monoxide poisoning is more common during the cold weather months in Wisconsin,” said Dr. Henry Anderson, Chief Medical Officer in the Department of Health Services. “State records show that nearly half of all accidental carbon monoxide deaths occur in winter months.”

Carbon monoxide is particularly dangerous because it is colorless and odorless and can come from things you use in your home every day. Poorly functioning or unvented furnaces or other appliances, such as portable generators, heaters and stoves, can quickly create dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. In 2007, 15 of the 32 deaths due to accidental carbon monoxide poisoning occurred between January 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>.

“One of the best defenses is a carbon monoxide detector,” Anderson said. “These detectors work like smoke alarms to alert you to dangerously high levels of carbon monoxide. Battery powered detectors are also available so you can take one with you any time you use gas and oil burning appliances away from home.”

It is recommended that families install carbon monoxide detectors on every level of their home, especially near sleeping areas.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include headache, fatigue, dizziness, shortness of breath, nausea and mental confusion. High levels of exposure may lead to more serious health problems, including loss of consciousness and death.

More winter weather safety tips can be found at  
<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/InjuryPrevention/WeatherRelated/WinterCold/index.htm>

For heating and energy assistance information, go to the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Division of Energy Services at <http://www.homeenergyplus.wi.gov/>

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