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Apollo Safety reminds of carbon monoxide risk

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Fall River, MA October is Fire Prevention Month and Apollo Safety, Inc., providers of gas detection products and services for hospitals, universities, government operations and other organizations throughout New England, reminds residents that now is the perfect time to update aging smoke alarms to combination smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, as well as replace the batteries and test existing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

Apollo Safety founder John Carvalho, said, "You cannot see or smell carbon monoxide, and it can be lethal. Heating equipment, automobiles and generators are a few examples of potential sources of carbon monoxide, a toxic gas which is as significant a safety risk as fire."

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), carbon monoxide is created when fuels such as wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, kerosene, methane, and gasoline burn incompletely. And, the number of carbon monoxide incidents continues to rise. In 2003 there were 40,900 incidents, to which that number nearly doubled in 2010.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors should be situated on every level of the home, and also near sleeping areas in the home.

"Never ignore a carbon monoxide alarm that is sounding in your home," continued Carvalho. "Even though these alarms are incredibly sensitive and built to alert you as early as possible, high levels of carbon monoxide can cause loss of consciousness in minutes. Time is of the essence. Everyone must leave the premises immediately and call the fire department from outside your home."

The Farmers' Almanac is predicting that the Northeast will have "closer to normal temperatures", but a very snowy winter. This means outdoor vents (such as dryer, stove, and furnace vents) may become blocked with snow, causing carbon monoxide to back up into the home. Be sure to monitor all vents and keep them clear.

Secondary heat or fuel sources, such as generators and kerosene heaters, often relied upon by homeowners, apartment dwellers and some businesses during storm power outages, pose significant risk for carbon monoxide. For example, when using kerosene heaters, adequate ventilation should be a priority. Keeps doors open, a window open at least a crack and perhaps even the fireplace flue open. Generators should never be used indoors, and should be situated outdoors far from the home's windows, doors and vents. Additionally, automobiles should never be left running (for example, to "warm up" on cold mornings) in the garage.

Gas detection systems are just as necessary as fire alarm systems. They alarm at the first sign of trouble, but maintenance is key to ensure they are always in working order. Carbon monoxide detectors should be replaced every five years.

Carvalho noted, "Carbon monoxide poisoning can be fatal, but is highly preventable. Detection is key and saves lives. Protect your loved ones by installing and maintaining smoke and carbon monoxide detectors throughout your home."

Founded in 1995, Apollo Safety, Inc. has grown to become the leading safety and technical services equipment provider in New England. As experts in gas/toxic leak prevention and detection, Apollo Safety goes beyond simply installing gas detection systems, to provide regular maintenance and monitoring (testing) of the systems to ensure they are continually in optimal working order.

Apollo Safety provides portable, stationary and wireless gas detection systems, sales and support for most major brands of gas detection device manufacturers, as well as service in their "state of the art" in-house service center. The company also provides on-site support with factory-trained technicians for both portable and stationary gas detection systems.

Apollo Safety is a member of the National Safety Council, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Rhode Island Fire Chiefs Association (RIAFC) and the Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts (FCAM) and is trusted by facilities managers, building owners, landlords, universities, hotels, institutions, government operations and others throughout the region.

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