
PUBLIC SAFETY BULLETIN

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BC Coroners Service
Office of the Fire Commissioner

CORONER ISSUES CARBON MONOXIDE WARNING

VICTORIA – As temperatures drop across the province, the BC Coroners Service and the Office of the Fire Commissioner are reminding British Columbians of the dangers posed by some alternate heating and power sources.

Portable camp stoves, barbeque grills or generators should never be used indoors, even if ventilation is provided. These devices deplete oxygen and produce large amounts of carbon monoxide (CO).

In 2007, five people in B.C. died from carbon monoxide poisoning related to the use of gas-powered appliances.

Carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless gas. You may not smell it but you could still be exposed to CO. High-level carbon monoxide poisoning can cause death in as little as one to three minutes. Even when not fatal, acute and long-term exposure to CO can cause serious health problems.

To protect themselves from the dangers of carbon monoxide, British Columbians are advised to:

- Follow manufacturers operating instructions on all heating sources, BBQs and portable generators.
- Never use a portable generator or BBQ indoors, including inside a garage or other enclosed or partially enclosed area.
- Only operate portable generators outdoors and at a location where the exhaust cannot enter into your home or other buildings through doors or windows.
- Use CO detector at home. This is also advisable for homes that have a natural gas fired forced air heating system.

The BC Coroners Service is responsible for the investigation of all unnatural, sudden and unexpected, unexplained or unattended deaths. It makes recommendations to improve public safety and prevent death in similar circumstances.

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