



by Scott Obel

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning– *A Disaster Within A Disaster*

This time of year when storms hit we read about tragic spikes in carbon monoxide poisoning that result when people attempt to stay warm after power outages.

Power outages, like the ones this winter season, can occur during weather extremes. They also result from natural disasters such as fires, hurricanes, earthquakes and very recently intentional sabotage of power transmission equipment as experienced in Washington and North Carolina. Heavy snow storms weigh down power lines and often cause power loss too.

When power outages occur, people often depend on alternative sources of power or heat– portable generators, stoves, lanterns, gas ranges or charcoal and wood fires. Carbon monoxide is found in the fumes produced by these sources. It can build up in enclosed spaces poisoning the people and animals inside.

Carbon monoxide (CO) poses an invisible threat. It is colorless and odorless. If it replaces the oxygen in the air and is inhaled, it creates a toxic compound in your body (CO poisoning).

CO poisoning is entirely preventable. Protect yourself and your family by installing a CO detector, testing the batteries every six months, and acting wisely in case of a power outage.

- Never use a gas range or oven to heat a home.
- Never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a garage.
- Never run a generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed structure, even if the doors or windows are open, unless the equipment is professionally installed and vented.
- Keep vents and flues free of debris, especially if winds are high. Flying debris can block ventilation lines.
- Never run a motor vehicle or any gasoline-powered engine less than 20 feet from an open window, door, or vent where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area.
- Never use a charcoal grill, propane grill, hibachi, kerosene lantern, or portable camping stove inside a home, tent, or camper.
- If conditions are too hot or too cold, seek shelter with friends or at a community shelter.

If CO poisoning is suspected, consult a health care professional right away. The most common symptoms are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. People who are sleeping or who have been drinking alcohol can die from CO poisoning before having symptoms.

Every year, in the US, approximately 50,000 people visit ERs due to accidental CO poisoning and at least 430 people die.

For more information go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/co/>



**The February CERT meeting will be held on
Wednesday, February 15th at 6pm in the Garden Room
instead of the previously published date of the 14th.**

CERT's **March 15th** meeting, like all other CERT meetings, is open to all residents and will include a presentation by Dr. Lisa Shaver on the subject of emergency food selection. She will discuss nutrient and energy factors and will also cover preparation and storage. She will explain *Go Bags* and what foods and items to keep in them, where to keep your *Go Bag* and other considerations. Dr. Lisa Shaver is a volunteer with the NET (Neighborhood Emergency Team) in Portland and a recent visitor to the CERT meeting.

CERT 2023 MEETINGS

Tuesday, April 11th	Tuesday, December 13th	Wednesday, September 13th
Tuesday, June 13th	Wednesday, January 11th	Wednesday, November 8th
Tuesday, August 8th	Wednesday, May 10th	
Tuesday, October 10th	Wednesday, July 12th	