

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 22, 2009

Contact: Barbara Insley Crouch, PharmD  
Director  
Office: 587-0600

Marty Malheiro, MS, CHES  
Coordinator, Outreach Education  
Office: 587-0603

**Carbon Monoxide Poisoning: A Lurking Danger All Year Long**

Salt Lake City, UT – Although most cases of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning occur in winter, the Utah Poison Control Center urges everyone to be aware that CO poisoning can happen throughout the year, including during the summer.

CO is a colorless and odorless gas that can be deadly. It is produced by incomplete combustion of fuels, such as gasoline, propane, kerosene, and charcoal.

CO is dangerous because it builds up in confined spaces and slowly overpowers victims, who cannot see or smell the fumes. Important sources for CO include faulty or improperly vented gas appliances, such as furnaces or water heaters, and use of any fuel-burning device (i.e. heater, lantern, generator) in a poorly ventilated or enclosed space. This can include gasoline-powered boat engines or onboard generators, such as those on a houseboat.

Called the silent killer, the symptoms of CO poisoning can appear to be just like those of the flu and include headache, nausea, and dizziness. Serious CO poisoning can lead to loss of consciousness and, because the brain is very sensitive to the effects of the gas, long-term neurologic problems, in extreme cases, CO poisoning can cause death.

The Utah Poison Control Center urges everyone to be aware of the dangers of CO poisoning:

- Do NOT use generators, fuel-burning equipment or charcoal grills indoors or in enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces, such as a tent or garage.
- Do NOT allow anyone to swim or play around the area where engines vent their exhaust, such as the back of a houseboat.
- Ensure proper venting of all fuel-burning appliances in the home.
- Learn to recognize the warning symptoms of CO poisoning: headache, nausea, weakness, dizziness or loss of consciousness
- Install a battery-operated CO detector in your home, cabin or houseboat.
- If you think someone has symptoms of CO poisoning, immediately turn off equipment and go to a place with fresh air.
- For life-threatening problems, such as difficulty breathing or fainting, call 911
- For advice or questions, call the poison center toll-free 24 hour hotline at 1-800-222-1222

Fact Sheet on portable generator safety at: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/portgen.pdf>

###