

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

Baie-Comeau, December 15, 2021 – Considering the cold weather, the Direction de santé publique de la Côte-Nord would like to remind the population of the risks associated with carbon monoxide and the means to prevent poisoning.

Carbon monoxide is a very toxic gas that cannot be seen or smelled. It is produced when burning any type of fuel (e.g., wood, petroleum products). Carbon monoxide is often released from a heating unit (stove, fireplace) used in a home or in a cottage.

Poisoning symptoms include headaches, nausea, dizziness, fatigue, muscle weakness, loss of consciousness, and convulsions that can lead to cardiorespiratory arrest. They may appear similar to influenza-like illness, gastroenteritis, food poisoning, alcohol intoxication, or cardiac or psychiatric symptoms. Certain people are more vulnerable to poisoning, such as children, seniors, pregnant women, and people who suffer from cardiorespiratory diseases.

Recommendations to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning

- Have your fuel-powered central or supplementary heating systems (e.g., wood, petroleum products) checked and maintained.
- Make sure your chimney was properly swept in the fall.
- Never use fuel-burning equipment (ex.: briquette stove, Hibachi, barbecue, fuel-burning heater, generator) inside a home, garage, temporary shelter, shed or any other enclosed space that is not designed for this purpose.
- Only use fuel-burning equipment outside and far away from windows or air intakes leading to the inside of an enclosed space (e.g., home, shed, garage).
- Avoid starting a vehicle, snowmobile or snow blower inside a garage or temporary shelter, even with the doors open.
- Always completely clear snow from your vehicle before starting it.
- When riding a snowmobile with a sled, make sure the sled is specifically adapted to the snowmobile and not made for another type of recreational vehicle.
- Avoid cleaning snow from your driveway with a snow blower equipped with a protective cab (often in polythene) for an extended period.
- If there is a source of carbon monoxide in your home (fuel heating, gas stove), **install carbon monoxide detectors** with the CSA or ULC logos and follow the manufacturer's guidelines on where to install it, among other things.
- Respect the expiry date of carbon monoxide detectors and replace the batteries twice a year, during time changes, as with smoke detectors (these two devices are often combined into one, which is adequate).

For more information, visit <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/advice-and-prevention/health-and-environment/preventing-carbon-monoxide-poisoning/>.

- 30 -

Source: Pascal Paradis
Communication advisor
Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de la Côte-Nord
418 589-9845, ext. 342268