



Department of Commerce,  
Division of State Fire Marshal  
Department of Health

## News Release

John R. Kasich /Governor  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Return to Colder Weather Increases Danger of Carbon Monoxide Exposure**

COLUMBUS—The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the State Fire Marshal reminds Ohioans to be cautious when heating their homes during the coming cold weather season. The warning comes following reports of a statewide increase in emergency department visits and calls to poison control centers by Ohioans over the past 10 days for carbon monoxide exposure.

“The spike in carbon monoxide exposure is an indication that colder temperatures are beginning to take hold,” said ODH Director Ted Wymyslo, M.D. “Ohioans need to know the warning signs of CO poisoning and should seek immediate medical attention if they suspect CO contact.”

According to surveillance experts at the state health department, the upward trend for this time of the season is higher than usual compared to previous years. While there is no single reason identified for the rise in CO exposure, firing up the furnace for the first time in colder weather, as well as the increased use of generators and portable heating devices, are among the top causes of CO poisoning.

“Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that can kill without warning,” said State Fire Marshal Larry Flowers. “As the weather begins to turn colder, the risks associated with heating your home increases the likelihood of such an accident. We implore everyone to have their furnaces inspected annually and to use all generators and portable heaters in accordance with the manufacturer’s specifications.”

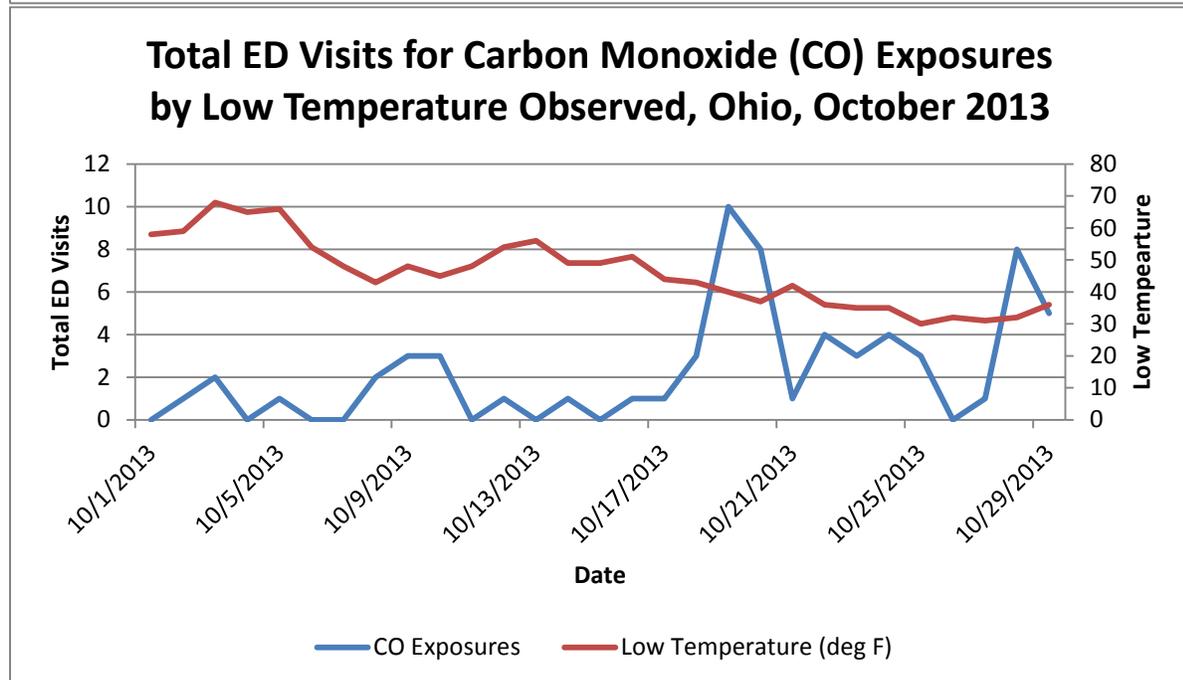
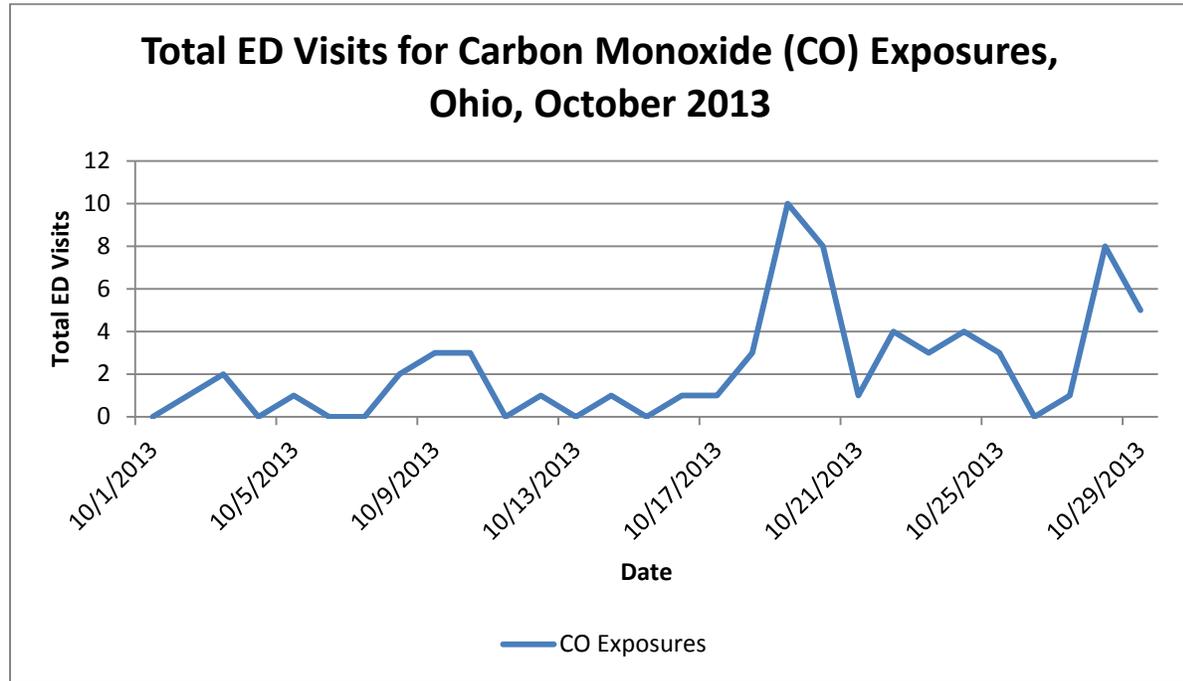
While hundreds of people die in the U.S. each year from accidental CO poisoning, this tragedy can be prevented. If you don’t have a battery-powered or battery back-up CO detector in your home, install one as soon as possible and check it every six months. You should also follow these safety tips:

- Do not run your car inside a garage that is attached to your home, even if the garage door is open to the outside;
- Have your heating system, water heater and other gas, oil or coal burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician each year; and
- Never heat your house with a gas oven.

Since you can’t see or smell carbon monoxide, it is important to recognize the most common symptoms of CO poisoning. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. High levels of CO inhalation can cause loss of consciousness

and death. If you think you are experiencing CO poisoning, you should get fresh air and seek medical attention immediately!

For more information, visit the Ohio Department of Commerce – Division of State Fire Marshall website: [http://www.com.ohio.gov/documents/fire\\_CarbonMonoxide.pdf](http://www.com.ohio.gov/documents/fire_CarbonMonoxide.pdf)  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/co/guidelines.htm>  
Ohio Department of Health: <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/features/odhfeatures/codangers.aspx>



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