



FEDERATION OF AMERICAN CONSUMERS AND TRAVELERS - NEWS RELEASE -

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Heating System Warnings

EDWARDSVILLE, IL, January 10, 2010 - As Americans look for ways to save money in tough economic times, there is an increased risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisonings and fire deaths associated with the use of alternative heating and power sources.

Heating systems were associated with an average of 32,900 fires and 200 fire deaths per year from 2004 to 2006. This includes local fixed heaters, portable heaters, central heating systems, fireplaces and chimneys. CO deaths have been on the rise since 1999.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recommends several steps everyone should take to help offset the dangers:

- Schedule a yearly professional inspection of all fuel-burning home heating systems, including furnaces, boilers, fireplaces, wood stoves, water heaters, chimneys, flues and vents.
- As a second line of defense, install carbon monoxide alarms meeting the requirements of UL 2034 Single and Multiple Station Carbon Monoxide Alarms or CSA 6.19 Residential Carbon Monoxide Alarming Devices in the home. Make sure the batteries are fresh and working. Replace the batteries annually at the spring or autumn time changes. Activate the test button on the CO alarm monthly to ensure proper operation.
- Never operate a portable gasoline powered generator in an enclosed space such as a garage, shed or crawlspace, or in the home.
- Keep portable generators as far away from the home as possible -- away from open doors, windows or vents that could allow deadly carbon monoxide into the home.
- Use a space heater that has been tested to the latest safety standards and certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. An unvented gas space heater that meets current safety standards will shut off if oxygen levels fall too low.
- Do not use portable propane space heaters indoors or in any confined space unless they are specifically designed for indoor use. Always follow the manufacturer's directions for proper use.
- Never use gas or electric stoves to heat the home. They are not intended for that purpose and can pose a CO or fire hazard.

This news bulletin has been issued by The Federation of American Consumers and Travelers (FACT), a consumer organization formed under the not-for-profit corporation laws of the District of Columbia in 1984. FACT serves more than 1 million consumers nationwide. Additional information on FACT may be found in the *Encyclopedia of Associations*, and by visiting the association's Web site (www.usafact.org). Informative, unbiased news bulletins are regularly disseminated by FACT to help its members remain current on matters which might seriously impact their lives. The association does not offer support to -- and does not receive support from -- any political party or movement. In addition to publishing consumer-related reports, the association provides more than 30 benefits for its members, ranging from [medical insurance](#) and [dental discounts](#) to [prescription drug savings](#) and [scholarships](#). FACT's administrative office is located at 318 Hillsboro Avenue, Edwardsville, IL 62025.