



COUNTY OF ORANGE HEALTH CARE AGENCY

JULIETTE A. POULSON, RN, MN
DIRECTOR

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

MAILING ADDRESS:
405 W 5th STREET, 7th Floor
SANTA ANA, CA 92701

TELEPHONE: (714) 834-3155
FAX: (714) 834-5506
E-MAIL: Publicinfo@ochca.com



For Immediate Release
December 17, 2008

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Home Heating Safety Emphasized During Cold Weather

(Santa Ana) – Overnight temperatures in some areas of Orange County will dip below 40° this week, with Public Health officials urging area residents to use caution when heating their home.

“While Southern California enjoys moderate winters when compared to other areas of the United States, the temperatures in our area this week will be colder than average,” said Dr. Eric G. Hander, County Health Officer. “Almost every winter, there are cases in California of people who are overcome by carbon monoxide gas after bringing a charcoal grill indoors to provide heat. Never use a charcoal grill or other similar fuel-burning device to heat the inside your home.”

Residents are also cautioned against using their kitchen range or oven to heat their homes. Home furnaces and heaters should be inspected periodically, with needed repairs performed by a qualified and licensed heating or plumbing contractor. If space heaters are used, make sure there is nothing within three feet of the heater that could catch on fire, such as bedding, drapes or furniture. Never cover your space heater and never leave children unattended near a space heater. In the event that electric power is lost during a storm, never use a gasoline powered generator indoors, in a garage or near doors or windows where air may enter a home due to the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that at high levels of exposure can be fatal. Low levels of carbon monoxide poisoning can be confused with flu symptoms, food poisoning or other illnesses and can have a long term health risk if left unattended. Some of the symptoms of low level exposure include shortness of breath, mild nausea and mild headaches. Moderate levels of carbon monoxide exposure can present with headaches, dizziness, nausea, and light-headedness. Every home should have a carbon monoxide detector, which is very similar to a smoke detector.

To stay warm while outdoors during cold weather, remember to wear several layers of clothing with an outer layer that is waterproof. While current forecasts do not call for below freezing temperatures, area residents are also reminded to consider the needs of their pets for warm, dry shelter from the cold.

For more information on cold weather safety, visit The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov or the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services website at www.oes.ca.gov.

###