

LEMA LEDGER

Quarterly Newsletter of the Lancaster County Emergency Management Agency

DECEMBER 2013—"ALWAYS BE READY"

2014 EVENTS:

LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE 2014 MEETING SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 6, 2014

APRIL 3, 2014

JUNE 5, 2014

AUGUST 7, 2014

OCTOBER 2, 2014

DECEMBER 4, 2014

ALL MEETINGS ARE HELD AT THE PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING CENTER AND START AT 1 PM.

QUARTERLY TRAINING

The 2014 Quarterly Training schedule is as follows:

February 13, 2014

Topic: ALICE Awareness
Presented By: Dave Boucher

April 24, 2014

Topic: SCTF Overview
Presented by: Greg Noll

August 14, 2014

Topic: To Be Determined

November 13, 2014

Topic: To Be Determined

The location for all sessions will be at the Lancaster County Public Safety Training Center at 101 Champ Blvd., Manheim, PA 17545.



'TIS THE SEASON



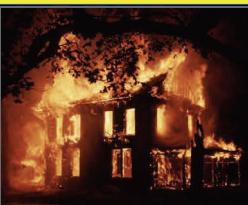
FREECHRISTMASWALLPAPERS.NET

The hallmark of the Holiday Season is sharing with family and friends, and helping those less fortunate. Its about giving, peace and remembering those no longer with us. It is also a time, statistically speaking, of increased home fires, civilian injuries and deaths. The staff of the Lancaster County Emergency Management Agency wishes you and yours the most enjoyable of holiday gatherings and events. AND; we also hope that it is a safe one. This edition of the LEMA Ledger focuses on holiday safety. As in the words of noted Risk Management pioneer Gordon Graham; 'if its' predictable; its preventable'. Please share the enclosed holiday tips so that we all have a joyous holiday season and bring in 2014 safety.

SPECIAL REPORT: Residential Heating Fires

Did You Know?

Winter residential building fires result in an estimated average of 945 deaths, 3,825 injuries, and \$1,708,000,000 in property loss each year.



The United States Fire Administration (USFA) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) are working together to remind everyone that home fires are more prevalent in winter than in any other season. This is due in part to an increase in cooking and heating fires. Holiday decorations and winter storms that can interrupt electrical service and cause people to turn to alternative heating sources also contribute to the increased risk of fire in winter. Winter fires can be prevented! Below are highlights of a joint USFA and NFPA Residential Heating fire study.

- An estimated average of 50,100 heating fires in residential buildings occurred in the United States each year and resulted in an annual average of approximately 150 deaths, 575 injuries, and \$326 million in property loss.
- Heating was the second leading cause of all residential building fires following cooking.
- Residential building heating fires peaked in the early evening hours between 5 and 9 p.m. with the highest peak between 6 and 8 p.m. This 4-hour period accounted for 30 percent of all residential building heating fires.
- Residential building heating fires peaked in January (21 percent) and declined to the lowest point during the summer months from June to August.
- Confined fires, those fires confined to chimneys, flues, or fuel burners, accounted for 87 percent of residential building heating fires.
- Thirty percent of the nonconfined residential building heating fires occurred because the heat source was too close to combustibles.

Holiday Decorations and Candle Care Tips

Use Only Nonflammable Decorations

All decorations should be nonflammable or flame-retardant and placed away from heat vents. If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

Don't Block Exits

Ensure that trees and other holiday decorations do not block an exit way. In the event of a fire, time is of the essence. A blocked entry/exit way puts you and your family at risk.

Never Put Wrapping Paper in the Fireplace

Wrapping paper in the fireplace can result in a very large fire, throwing off dangerous sparks and embers that may result in a chimney fire.

Never Leave a Burning Candle Unattended

Consider using battery-operated flameless candles, which can look, smell and feel like real candles.

If You Do Use Lit Candles

Make sure candles are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Keep candles at least 12 inches from anything that can burn. Avoid using candles in bedrooms and sleeping areas.

Never Put Lit Candles on a Tree

Do not go near a Christmas tree with an open flame – candles, lighters or matches.



CHRISTMAS TREE FIRE SAFETY



Decorating homes and businesses is a long-standing tradition around the holiday season. Unfortunately, these same decorations may increase your chances of fire. Based on data from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), an estimated 240 home fires involving Christmas trees and another 150 home fires involving holiday lights and other decorative lighting occur each year. Together, these fires result in 21 deaths and \$25.2 million in direct property damage.

Following a few simple fire safety tips can keep electric lights, candles, and the ever popular Christmas tree from creating a tragedy. Learn how to prevent a fire and what to do in case a fire starts in your home. Make sure all exits are accessible and not blocked by decorations or trees. Help ensure that you have a fire safe holiday season.

CHRISTMAS TREES

What's a traditional Christmas morning scene without a beautifully decorated tree? If your household includes a natural tree in its festivities, take to heart the sales person's suggestion – "Keep the tree watered."

Christmas trees account for hundreds of fires annually. Typically, shorts in electrical lights or open flames from candles, lighters or matches start tree fires. Well-watered trees are not a problem. A dry and neglected tree can be. At the website http://www.usfa.fema.gov/citizens/home_fire_prev/holiday-seasonal/holiday.shtml is a dramatic video that illustrates the rapid fire spread in a Christmas tree.

Selecting a Tree For The Holidays

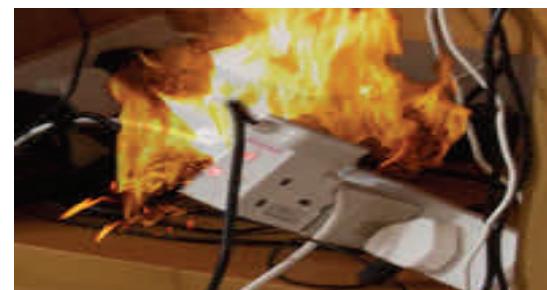
Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needles should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long and, has probably dried out, and is a fire hazard.

Caring for Your Tree

Do not place your tree close to a heat source (unlike the one on the cover), including a fireplace or heat vent. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.

Disposing of Your Tree

Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or wood-burning stove. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling center or having it hauled away by a community pick-up service.



Maintain Your Holiday Lights

Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory.

Do Not Overload Electrical Outlets

Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires – they should not be warm to the touch.

Do not leave holiday lights on unattended!

CHECK YOUR BATTERIES



The reverse side of the smoke detector should list the year of manufacture.

When its time to change clocks to adjust for daylight savings time, public service announcements remind people to change the batteries in their smoke detectors

This is a good practice and should be supported by more consistent testing throughout the year. Some detectors will chirp when the battery life is ending. Some batteries will expire without notice. Batteries should be changed at

least twice a year and as needed through consistent testing.

Many people do not know that smoke detectors have a shelf life. Depending on the manufacturer, the shelf life is as little as is 5-7 years. Several manufacturers recommend replacing the unit after its warranty has expired.

Smoke detectors should list the year of manufacture on it. And any smoke detector that

is more than 5 years old should be considered for replacement.

We've seen the tragedy locally when smoke detectors are not properly maintained. A few minutes and a couple of dollars a year will enhance the chances of you and your family surviving if the unthinkable happens.

If you haven't checked your batteries lately; do so now!

Do You Know CO?

Unintentional CO exposure accounts for an estimated 15,000 emergency department visits and 500 unintentional deaths in the United States each year.

We all know that Carbon Monoxide (CO) is odorless and colorless. The only way to know its presence, other than by exposure symptoms, is through detection. Many department and hardware stores sell varying brands of CO detectors for homeowner use. For maximum Effectiveness, detectors should be properly installed, maintained and tested. While we cannot recommend one brand over another, internet searches from consumer product reviews may be beneficial.

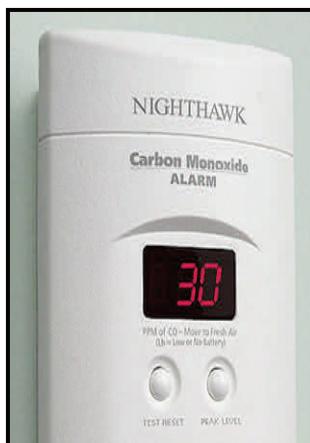
Many people feel that as long as fresh batteries

are installed the device is effective. However, CO detectors have shelf life's and when investigating a CO detector activation without illness, one question to the occupant should be how old the device is. The average smoke detector shelf life is 5-7 years. This varies by manufacturer. Several recommend replacing the unit after its warranty has expired.

For CO investigation incidents, proper monitoring techniques, including appropriate readings interpretation should be employed. Remember CO's

physical characteristics, and how and where it may accumulate in a structure.

For more information on Carbon Monoxide see page 9.



Carbon Monoxide Toxicity

Recommended Exposure Limit (REL) = 35 ppm

Short Term Exposure Limit (STEL) = 200 ppm

Threshold Limit Value—Ceiling (TLV-C) = 400 ppm

Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) = 1,200 ppm

COOKING FIRE SAFETY

Many families gather in the kitchen to spend time together during the holidays. It can, however, be one of the most hazardous rooms in the house if you don't practice safe cooking behaviors. Cooking equipment, most often a range or stovetop, is the leading cause of reported home fires and home fire injuries in the United States. Cooking equipment is also the leading cause of unreported fires and associated injuries.

It's a recipe for serious injury or even death to wear loose clothing (especially hanging sleeves), walk away from a cooking pot on the stove, or leave items that can catch fire, such as potholders or paper towels, around the stove. Whether you are cooking the family holiday dinner or a snack for the children, practicing safe cooking behaviors will help keep you and your family safe.



Choose the Right Equipment and Use It Properly

- Always use cooking equipment tested and approved by a recognized testing facility.
- Follow manufacturers' instructions and code requirements when installing and operating cooking equipment.
- Plug microwave ovens and other cooking appliances directly into a wall outlet. Never use an extension cord for a cooking appliance – it can overload the circuit and cause a fire.

Watch What You Heat

- The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking.
- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you're cooking.
- Stay alert! To prevent cooking fires, you have to be alert. You won't be if you are sleepy, have been drinking alcohol, or have taken medicine that makes you drowsy.

Keep Things That Can Catch Fire and Heat Sources Apart

- Keep anything that can catch fire - potholders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, towels, or curtains - away from your stovetop.
- Keep the stovetop, burners, and oven clean.
- Keep pets off cooking surfaces and nearby countertops to prevent them from knocking things onto the burner.
- Wear short, close-fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can dangle onto stove burners and catch fire if it comes into contact with a gas flame or electric burner.

If Your Clothes Catch Fire

If your clothes catch fire, stop, drop and roll. Stop immediately, drop to the ground and cover your face with your hands. Roll over and over or back and forth to put out the fire. Immediately cool the burn with cool water for 3 to 5 minutes and cover with a clean, dry cloth. Don't apply creams, ointments, sprays or other home remedies.

Fireplace and Home Fire Safety

More than one-third of Americans use fireplaces, wood stoves and other fuel-fired appliances as primary heat sources in their homes. Unfortunately, many people are unaware of the fire risks when heating with wood and solid fuels.

Heating fires account for 36% of residential home fires in rural areas every year. Often these fires are due to creosote buildup in chimneys and stovepipes. All home heating systems require regular maintenance to function safely and efficiently. The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) encourages you to practice the following fire safety steps to keep those home fires safely burning. Remember, fire safety is your personal responsibility ...***Fire Stops With You!***

Keep Fireplaces and Wood Stoves Clean

- Have your chimney or wood stove inspected and cleaned annually by a certified chimney specialist.
- Clear the area around the hearth of debris, decorations and flammable materials.
- Leave glass doors open while burning a fire. Leaving the doors open ensures that the fire receives enough air to ensure complete combustion and keeps creosote from building up in the chimney.
- Close glass doors when the fire is out to keep air from the chimney opening from getting into the room. Most glass fireplace doors have a metal mesh screen which should be closed when the glass doors are open. This mesh screen helps keep embers from getting out of the fireplace area.
- Always use a metal mesh screen with fireplaces that do not have a glass fireplace door.
- Install stovepipe thermometers to help monitor flue temperatures.
- Keep air inlets on wood stoves open, and never restrict air supply to fireplaces. Otherwise you may cause creosote buildup that could lead to a chimney fire.
- Use fire-resistant materials on walls around wood stoves.

Safely Burn Fuels



- Never use flammable liquids to start a fire.
- Use only seasoned hardwood. Soft, moist wood accelerates creosote buildup. In pellet stoves, burn only dry, seasoned wood pellets.
- Build small fires that burn completely and produce less smoke.
- Never burn cardboard boxes, trash or debris in your fireplace or wood stove.
- When building a fire, place logs at the rear of the fireplace on an adequate supporting grate.
- Never leave a fire in the fireplace unattended. Extinguish the fire before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Allow ashes to cool before disposing of them. Place ashes in a tightly covered metal container and keep the ash container at least 10 feet away from your home and any other nearby buildings. Never empty the ash directly into a trash can. Douse and saturate the ashes with water.

Protect the Outside of Your Home

- Stack firewood outdoors at least 30 feet away from your home.
- Keep the roof clear of leaves, pine needles and other debris.
- Cover the chimney with a mesh screen spark arrester.
- Remove branches hanging above the chimney, flues or vents.

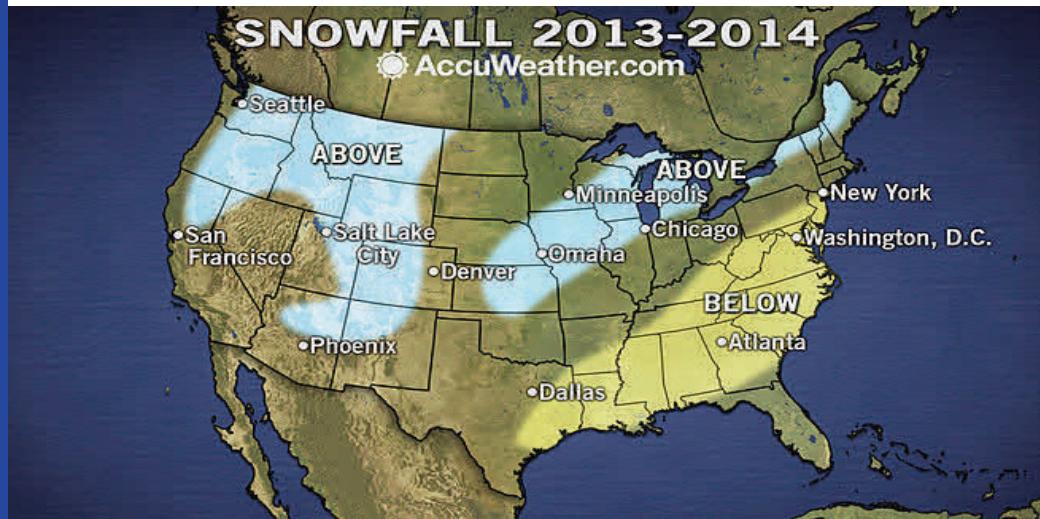


Snow This Season?

Winter Weather Advisories: Issued for accumulations of snow, freezing rain, freezing drizzle, and sleet which will cause significant inconveniences and, if caution is not exercised, could lead to life-threatening situations.

Winter Storm Watch: Alerts the public to the possibility of a blizzard, heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet. Winter Storm Watches are usually issued 12 to 48 hours before the beginning of a Win-

Winter Storm Warning: Issued when hazardous winter weather in the form of heavy snow, heavy freezing rain, or heavy sleet is imminent or occurring. Winter Storm Warnings are usually issued 12 to 24 hours before the event is expected to begin.



Areas not shaded will experience near-normal snow totals for the 2013-2014 season.

According to Accuweather.com the winter season will get off to a slow start in the Northeast with only occasional shots of cold early on. The northern Plains and the Rockies, however, will be bitterly cold at times and buried in snow. With the East as an exception, most ski resorts country-wide should not have a problem getting up-and-running this year. This season's precipitation may even bring drought relief to California, replenishing reservoirs and easing water shortages.

East to Remain Mild Until Latter Half of Season

Winter weather lovers will have to be patient this year, as the start of the season in the East certainly won't pack a punch in terms of cold or snowfall. Winter will begin mildly, with a long duration of above-normal temperatures. One snow system and some chilly air could come at times during November, however. Temperatures will fall in the latter part of the season, likely the beginning of January, allowing snow to fall along the I-95 corridor.

Philadelphia, which received only 8 inches of snow last year, will likely get higher amounts, but other areas from New York City to Boston should not expect to beat last year's totals. Overall, however, winter sports enthusiasts have a shot at an average season."It's not going to be a complete [snow drought season coming up, but I think they'll have to wait until probably late in the season to get their best chances of the higher snow amounts," AccuWeather.com Expert Long-Range Forecaster Paul Pastelok said.

Early in the season, the storm track will not favor coastal areas, but areas farther north, including Burlington, Vt., and areas north of Albany should have a strong chance at a white winter.

*Prepare NOW for the upcoming winter season.
See Page 8 for some preparedness tips!*

THREE STEP WINTER SURVIVAL

Step 1: Get a Kit

- Get an Emergency Supply Kit which includes items like non-perishable food, water, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, extra flashlights and batteries.
- Thoroughly check and update your family's Emergency Supply Kit before winter approaches and add the following supplies in preparation for winter weather:
- Rock salt** or more environmentally safe products to melt ice on walkways. Visit the Environmental Protection Agency for a complete list of recommended products.
- **Sand** to improve traction
- **Snow shovels** and other snow removal equipment.
- Also include **adequate clothing and blankets** to keep you warm.

Step 2: Make a Plan

Prepare Your Family

- Make a Family Emergency Plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you will contact one another, how you will get back together and what you will do in case of an emergency.
- Plan places where your family will meet, both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood.
- It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.
- You may also want to inquire about emergency plans at places where your family spends time: work, daycare and school. If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create

Step 3: Be Informed

Prepare Your Home / Car

- Make sure your home is well insulated and that you have weather stripping around your doors and window-sills to keep the warm air inside.
- Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing.
- Learn how to shut off water valves (in case a pipe bursts).
- Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them. House fires pose an additional risk as more people turn to alternate heating sources without taking the necessary safety precautions.
- Know ahead of time what you should do to help elderly or disabled friends, neighbors or employees.
- Hire a contractor to check the structural stability of the roof to sustain unusually heavy weight from the accumulation of snow - or water, if drains on flat roofs do not work.
- If you have a car, fill the gas tank in case you have to leave. In addition, check or have a mechanic check the following items on your car:
- Antifreeze levels - ensure they are sufficient to avoid freezing.
- Battery and ignition system - should be in top condition and battery terminals should be clean.
- Brakes - check for wear and fluid levels.
- Exhaust system - check for leaks and crimped pipes and repair or replace as necessary. **Carbon monoxide is deadly and usually gives no warning.**
- Fuel and air filters - replace and keep water out of the system by using additives and maintaining a full tank of gas.
- Heater and defroster - ensure they work properly.
- Lights and flashing hazard lights - check for serviceability.

- Oil - check for level and weight. Heavier oils congeal more at low temperatures and do not lubricate as well.
- Thermostat - ensure it works properly.
- Tires - make sure the tires have adequate tread. All-weather radials are usually adequate for most winter conditions. However, some jurisdictions require that to drive on their roads, vehicles must be equipped with chains or snow tires with studs.
- Windshield wiper equipment - repair any problems and maintain proper washer fluid level.

Familiarize yourself with the terms that are used to identify winter weather

- **Freezing Rain** creates a coating of ice on roads and walkways.
- **Sleet** is rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet also causes roads to freeze and become slippery.
- **Winter Weather Advisory** means cold, ice and snow are expected.
- **Winter Storm Watch** means severe weather such as heavy snow or ice is possible in the next day or two.
- **Winter Storm Warning** means severe winter conditions have begun or will begin very soon.
- **Blizzard Warning** means heavy snow and strong winds will produce a blinding snow, near zero visibility, deep drifts and life-threatening wind chill.
- **Frost/Freeze Warning** means below freezing temperatures are expected.

Reprinted from, and for more information visit
<http://www.ready.gov/america/beinformed/winter.html>



CARBON MONOXIDE

What is carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide, or CO, is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death.

Where is CO found?

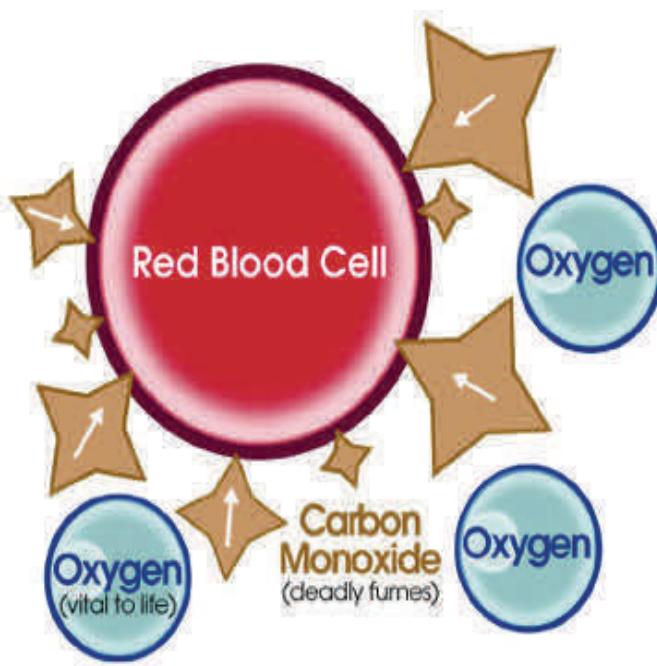
CO is found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by cars and trucks, small gasoline engines, stoves, lanterns, burning charcoal and wood, and gas ranges and heating systems. CO from these sources can build up in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces. People and animals in these spaces can be poisoned by breathing it.

What are the 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. Unless suspected, CO poisoning can be difficult to diagnose because the symptoms mimic other illnesses. People who are sleeping or intoxicated can die from CO poisoning before ever experiencing symptoms.

How does CO poisoning work?

Red blood cells pick up CO quicker than they pick up oxygen. If there is a lot of CO in the air, the body may replace oxygen in blood with CO. This blocks oxygen from getting into the body, which can damage tissues and result in death.



Note: This article republished from Fall 2011 LEMA Ledger

Who is at risk from CO poisoning?

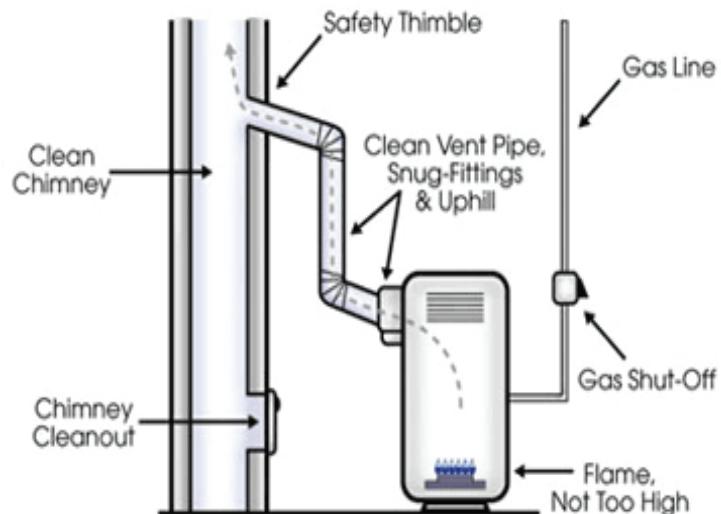
All people and animals are at risk for CO poisoning. Certain groups — unborn babies, infants, and people with chronic heart disease, anemia, or respiratory problems — are more susceptible to its effects. Each year, more than 400 Americans die from unintentional CO poisoning, more than 20,000 visit the emergency room and more than 4,000 are hospitalized due to CO poisoning. Fatality is highest among Americans 65 and older.

How to prevent CO poisoning from home appliances?

- Have your heating system, water heater and any other gas, oil, or coal burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year.
- Do not use portable flameless chemical heaters (catalytic) indoors. Although these heaters don't have a flame, they burn gas and can cause CO to build up inside your home, cabin, or camper.
- If you smell an odor from your gas refrigerator's cooling unit have an expert service it. An odor from the cooling unit of your gas refrigerator can mean you have a defect in the cooling unit. It could also be giving off CO.
- When purchasing gas equipment, buy only equipment carrying the seal of a national testing agency, such as the American Gas Association or Underwriters' Laboratories.
- Install a battery-operated CO detector in your home and check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall.

For more information on Carbon Monoxide preparedness, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/co/faqs.htm>

Here's the Safe Way to Connect Heating Equipment to the Chimney



Lancaster County Emergency Management Agency

P O Box 219 * Manheim PA 17545-0219

Business Phone: 800-808-5236 or 717-664-1200 * Fax 717-664-1235

Emergency Management Staff

Randall S. Gockley, Coordinator

rgockley@lancema.us—717-664-1200

Philip A Colvin, Deputy Director

pcolvin@lancema.us—717-664-1203

Cheryl Black, Administrative Assistant

cblack@lancema.us—717-664-1207

Brenda B. Pittman, EMS / CISM Coordinator

bpittman@lancema.us—717-664-1209

Eric G. Bachman, Hazardous Materials Administrator

LEMA Ledger Editor

ebachman@lancema.us—717-664-1204

David Boucher, Operations and Training Coordinator

dboucher@lancema.us—717-664-1205

The Lancaster County Emergency Management Agency maintains emergency plans for facilities that use or produce hazardous materials, dam failures, nuclear facilities, and for other types of disasters both man-made or natural.

The office also coordinates and directs actions that take place during large scale emergency situations. This coordination is performed at the Emergency Operations Center located within our facility. These activities are done in close cooperation with the County Commissioners, County Administrator, local Emergency Management Agencies (municipalities within the county), and emergency service organizations throughout the county.

Lancaster County Board of Commissioners

Scott Martin, Chairman

Dennis P. Stuckey, Vice-Chairman

Craig Lehman



Hazards Present During and After a Winter Storm

Winter storms can cause or contribute to extraordinary situations including the following:

- Alternative heating devices used incorrectly create fire hazards.
- Damaged or downed utility lines can present a fire and life safety hazard.
- Water damaged appliances and utilities can be electrically charged.
- Frozen water pipes can burst and cause safety hazards.
- Leaking gas lines, damaged or leaking gas propane containers and leaking vehicle gas tanks may explode or ignite.
- Generators are often used during power outages. Generators that are not properly used and maintained can be very hazardous.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE LEMA STAFF!