



January 7, 2015



## DAILY SITUATIONAL AWARENESS BRIEF



Marion County  
Medical Multi-Agency  
Coordination Center

### NATIONAL TERRORISM ADVISORY SYSTEM

No active alerts



49°

Mostly sunny, with a high near 49.  
South wind 3 to 5 mph.

Mostly Sunny



39°

Mostly cloudy, with a low around 39.  
South southeast wind 3 to 5 mph.

Mostly  
Cloudy



ASTHMA  
INDEX

0



UV  
INDEX

4

## THREAT ANALYSIS

### Winter storms bring higher risk of carbon monoxide poisoning

With severe weather affecting much of the United States this week, healthcare providers are reminded that the risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning increases during the winter months.

CO is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that can cause sudden illness and death but has a non-specific clinical presentation. In 2011 there were more than 12,000 unintentional CO exposure cases reported to U.S. Poison Control Centers. CO poisoning is a frequent hazard after massive snowstorms and other natural disasters that lead to power outages, especially when people attempt to use fuel-powered heating sources indoors. (Sources: [American Journal of Preventive Medicine](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#))

A study published in 2013 revealed that portable generators and charcoal grills were the most common sources of CO exposure reported to a Poison Center during a prolonged power outage. Eighty-five percent of people were hospitalized, with the peak number of patients arriving two to three days into the outage. The same study showed that following a major snowstorm, vehicle exhaust was the most common source of CO poisoning, often due to an exhaust system being obstructed by snow. About 50 percent of people were hospitalized, with the peak occurring by the end of the first day. (Source: [American Journal of Preventive Medicine](#))

Emergency medical services (EMS) personnel should also be aware of increased vulnerability to CO exposure when they respond to calls during winter storms. In an incident in Austria, 11 EMS personnel were hospitalized for CO exposure after responding to a call at the home of a patient with cardiac injury that turned out to be associated with CO poisoning. (Source: [Journal of Emergency Medicine](#))

## ACTION STEPS

1

Review the most common symptoms of CO poisoning and treatment options, such as provision of oxygen and hyperbaric oxygen therapy, as outlined in the CDC's [Clinical Guidance for Carbon Monoxide Poisoning After a Disaster](#).

2

Heed the advice of the [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) and encourage others to do the same: never use a generator inside your home or garage, keep generators at least 20 feet away from windows, doors and vents, and check the batteries in your CO detectors ahead of winter storms.

3

Use tools like handheld CO detectors when responding to incidents in the field to evaluate the threat of exposure for first responders. Make sure your organization has protocols in place for evacuating a location should responders detect or suspect CO poisoning. (Sources: [Journal of Emergency Medicine](#), [EMS World](#))

## UPCOMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY

07

**Dancing with the Stars**  
Mura Theatre

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