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Senior Safety News

Happy Holidays!

The staff of 'The Buzz' would like to wish all of our readers a happy holiday season, as well as, a fruitful and healthy new year.

Part of keeping healthy in the coming year is staying safety aware. If Senior Safety Online can help citizens keep safe by alerting them to the safety pitfalls in their living areas and in the community, then we feel good about our mission.

Our mission is important to us as we build our services into the community. We have worked with Senior Housing facilities for over seven years and have seen the results of our labor in reduction of accidents due to falls and fires. We want to make our simple program available to seniors living at home.

We feel that citizens live better at home with friends and family so they can share life experiences not only during the holidays but throughout the year.

Accident avoidance results in better mobility, less incidents of depression and a more confident handling of life in general. While it is self-evident that the results are important to seniors, there is another important benefit.

Seniors who are active and aware can contribute their wealth of life experiences to the community. Wisdom is a product of knowledge and experience. Only through living can it be attained. Sharing their wisdom and experience with their surrounding community provides the community with an inestimable resource.

One More article on Fire Safety

The holiday season is one of the worst times for fires. While the glow of Christmas tree lights, sharing of holiday cheer and aroma of baking cookies lead to warm and fuzzy feelings, there is an increased incidence of fires. Stay Alert and visit www.senior-safetyonline for tips on avoiding fires.

Make Your Home Fire Safe American Red Cross

- Smoke alarms save lives. Install a smoke alarm outside each sleeping area and on each additional level of your home.
- If people sleep with doors closed, install smoke alarms inside sleeping areas, too.
- Use the test button to check each smoke alarm once a month. When necessary, replace batteries immediately. Replace all batteries at least once a year.
- Vacuum away cobwebs and dust from your smoke alarms monthly.
- Smoke alarms become less sensitive over time. Replace your smoke alarms every ten years.
- Consider having one or more working fire extinguishers in your home. Get training from the fire department in how to use them.
- Consider installing an automatic fire sprinkler system in your home.

Plan Your Escape Routes

- Determine at least two ways to escape from every room of your home.
- Consider escape ladders for sleeping areas on the second or third floor. Learn how to use them and store them near the window.
- Select a location outside your home where everyone would meet after escaping.
- Practice your escape plan at least twice a year.

Escape Safely

- Once you are out, stay out! Call the fire department from a neighbor's home.
- If you see smoke or fire in your first escape route, use your second way out. If you must exit through smoke, crawl low under the smoke to your exit.
- If you are escaping through a closed door, feel the door before opening it. If it is warm, use your second way out.
- If smoke, heat, or flames block your exit routes, stay in the room with the door closed. Signal for help using a bright-colored cloth at the window. If there is a telephone in the room, call the fire department and tell them where you are

We, at Senior Safety Online do not think that it is wise for seniors to try and escape from a 2nd or 3rd story room unless they are fit. Falling while escaping a fire is not a good solution. For most older seniors, it would be better to locate the bedroom on the first floor.

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ITS TIME FOR YOUR FLU SHOT!

FLU SEASONS ARE UNPREDICTABLE IN A NUMBER OF WAYS. ALTHOUGH EPIDEMICS OF FLU HAPPEN EVERY YEAR, THE BEGINNING, SEVERITY, AND LENGTH OF THE EPIDEMIC DEPENDS ON MANY FACTORS, INCLUDING THE DIFFERENT TYPES AND STRAINS OF INFLUENZA VIRUSES CIRCULATING AND WHETHER THE VIRUSES IN THE VACCINE MATCH FLU VIRUSES THAT ARE CIRCULATING.

CDC RECOMMENDS A YEARLY FLU VACCINE AS THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT STEP IN PROTECTING AGAINST THIS SERIOUS DISEASE. WHILE THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT FLU VIRUSES, THE FLU VACCINE IS DESIGNED TO PROTECT AGAINST THE THREE MAIN FLU STRAINS THAT RESEARCH INDICATES WILL CAUSE THE MOST ILLNESS DURING THE FLU SEASON. THE VACCINE CAN PROTECT YOU FROM GETTING SICK FROM THESE THREE VIRUSES OR IT CAN MAKE YOUR ILLNESS Milder IF YOU GET A DIFFERENT FLU VIRUS.

FLU ACTIVITY TYPICALLY DOES NOT REACH ITS PEAK IN THE U.S. UNTIL JANUARY OR FEBRUARY. GETTING THE FLU VACCINE SOON AFTER IT BECOMES AVAILABLE EACH YEAR IS ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA, AND THE PROTECTION YOU GET FROM VACCINATION WILL LAST THROUGHOUT THE FLU SEASON. HOWEVER, FLU ACTIVITY CAN OCCUR AS LATE AS MAY SO GETTING A VACCINE LATER IN THE SEASON, INCLUDING IN DECEMBER, JANUARY OR EVEN LATER, AND EVEN IF FLU ACTIVITY HAS ALREADY STARTED IN YOUR AREA, CAN STILL OFFER PROTECTION IN MOST YEARS.

Senior Safety Online welcomes any ideas or suggestions that you want to share with us. Go to www.senior-safetyonline.com and use the contact form to contact us.

We work with Housing Service Coordinators and community activists to improve our program.

Become a Star! We will feature you in our newsletter.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon Monoxide is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, toxic gas.

Carbon Monoxide is produced by the incomplete combustion of the fossil fuels - gas, oil, coal and wood used in boilers, engines, oil burners, gas fires, water heaters, solid fuel appliances and open fires.

Dangerous amounts of CO can accumulate when, as a result of poor installation, poor maintenance or failure or damage to an appliance in service, the fuel is not burned properly, or when rooms are poorly ventilated and the Carbon Monoxide is unable to escape.

Having no smell, taste or color, in today's world of improved insulation and double glazing, it has become increasingly important to have good ventilation, maintain all appliances regularly and to have absolutely reliable Detector alarms installed giving both a visual and audible warning immediately there is a build-up of CO to dangerous levels.

10 Steps to Carbon Monoxide Safety

Carbon Monoxide poisoning is a subject that people know very little about. Not only can it kill you, it can cause permanent Neurological Damage in the longer term. In the short term, it can make you feel ill and inhibit you life potential.

Here's what to do to protect yourself. Please read all of the 10 steps to the end, it may be that the following five minutes could save your life, or the life of someone else.

1. Check the flame color of your appliances, if it's Orange you do have a problem. However, Blue does not necessarily mean it's safe. Get your appliances checked annually and get a CO Detector if unsure. You would not drive your car without an MOT. Doing the same for you home is common sense as you spend most of your time there.
2. Check the flue, is it blocked? Do you have creeping plants growing up your walls? Do you have birds nesting in your flue? Completely remove these obstructions from the flue area and fit a guard to stop any birds nesting. Get your flue checked! Is it draw-

ing properly? Was it fitted correctly in the first place?

3. Do you have a horizontal gas grill? They can be particularly hazardous. Is yours working correctly? Older appliances can be problematic, use the electric toaster instead. Get your cooker checked.

4. Is there adequate ventilation? Check your air bricks or trickle vents. Have you had double glazing fitted? If the appliances in your home do not have enough air they will produce Carbon Monoxide

5. When were your appliances last checked? Do it every year, don't leave it to chance. Remember, the engineer can only check the conditions on the day that he attends, get protection year round, fit a CO Detector with a low level alarm.

6. Do you suffer from unexplained illnesses, Fatigue, Muscle pains, Upset stomach, Lethargy, Dizziness, Headaches?

Go to your doctor and get a CohB test. Go directly from your house, don't go elsewhere as the CO in your blood will deplete and may not be picked up.

7. Are you a Tenant? Do you have a Safety Certificate? Does your landlord annually check the appliances in your accommodation? (He must do this by Law). Has the engineer done a thorough check? How long was he in the house for? Has your landlord fitted a CO Detector?

8. Are you a Landlord? Have you been carrying out statutory checks? Even if you have, you may be liable if one of your tenants becomes ill or worse, dies. Fit a Detector for your own and your tenants' piece of mind. As a Landlord, you have to show Due Diligence. If you are found guilty of neglect you may be fined or even sent to prison. Could you live with the consequences for the rest of your life?

9. We all feel better on holiday. If you feel especially invigorated it may be that you have been removed from the source of the poison. If your health goes into decline on your return, it may be that it's not just post holiday blues, you may be suffering the ill-effects from being poisoned from Carbon Monoxide in your home.

10. The most important thing that you can do to protect yourself and your family from the dangers of Carbon Monoxide poisoning is to get a Carbon Monoxide Detector Alarm with a low level indicator. If you fit a Detector you can at least be sure, having carried out all the about safety checks, that you are protected.

Due to the Holiday Season, this issue of the Buzz has been abbreviated to two pages. Again, have a happy holiday.