



**“Your Connection for Workplace Safety”**  
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## *Weekly Safety Tip*

*Life Is All About Choices!*<sup>®</sup>

February 1, 2016

### SCI Safety Tips: Detection is the Best Way to Thwart Invisible Killer

Source: <http://www.nsc.org>

Date: 2016



More than 400 Americans die from unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning every year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More than 20,000 visit the emergency room, and more than 4,000 others are hospitalized.

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that often goes undetected by humans, striking victims caught off guard or sound asleep. That's why it is referred to as the "invisible" or "silent" killer.

#### Can it Happen to You?

Everyone is at risk for carbon monoxide poisoning.

The CDC says infants, the elderly, and people with chronic heart disease, anemia or breathing problems are more prone to illness or death, but carbon monoxide doesn't discriminate – especially if certain conditions are present.

In April 2013, the off-road motor sport of [mud bogging](#) was linked to [carbon monoxide poisoning](#) when Shain Gandee, the 21-year-old star of the MTV series "Buckwild," died from accidental exposure. The tailpipe on his 1984 Ford Bronco became completely submerged in mud, and it is believed carbon monoxide leaked into the vehicle's cabin.

Two other men also were found dead inside Gandee's Ford Bronco, including his uncle.

In July 2015, four young people and a dog were found dead of reported carbon monoxide poisoning inside a remote family cabin in Maine. Authorities believe [they went to bed without shutting off a gas-powered generator](#) that had been running in the basement. Exposure also can result in permanent neurological damage.

#### **SCI Safety Slogan**

**SAFETY ISN'T  
A SLOGAN.  
IT'S A WAY  
OF LIFE.**

**James Lehrke-SCI**

### Where Does Carbon Monoxide Come From?

Carbon monoxide is produced by burning fuel in cars or trucks, houseboats, small engines, stoves, lanterns, grills, fireplaces, gas ranges or furnaces. When the gas builds up in enclosed spaces, people or animals who breathe it can be poisoned. Ventilation does not guarantee safety.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission says about 170 people in the United States die every year from carbon monoxide produced by non-automotive consumer products, such as room heaters and charcoal that is burned in homes. In 2005, the CPSC counted at least [94 generator-related carbon monoxide poisoning deaths](#), 47 of which occurred during power outages due to severe weather.

### How Can I Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning in My Home?

The National Safety Council recommends you install a battery-operated or battery back-up carbon monoxide detector in your home. Check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall. The CDC offers these and other [best-practice tips](#):

- Have your heating system, water heater and any other gas or coal-burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year
- Do not use portable flameless chemical heaters indoors
- Never use a generator inside your home, basement or garage or less than 20 feet from any window, door or vent
- Have your chimney checked and cleaned every year
- Make sure your gas appliances are vented properly

### Steps to Take When Carbon Monoxide Alarm Sounds

The CPSC says [never ignore a carbon monoxide alarm](#); it is warning you of a potentially deadly hazard. Do not try to find the source of the gas. Instead, follow these steps:

- Immediately move outside to fresh air
- Call emergency services, fire department or 911
- Do a head count to check that all persons are accounted for
- Do not reenter the premises until emergency responders have given you permission to do so

### What Are the Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning?

The U.S. Fire Administration has put together materials on the [dangers of carbon monoxide](#). Included is a list of carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms.

Low to moderate carbon monoxide poisoning is characterized by:

- Headache
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea
- Dizziness

High level carbon monoxide poisoning results in:

- Mental confusion
- Vomiting
- Loss of muscular coordination
- Loss of consciousness
- Death

Symptom severity varies depending on the level of carbon monoxide and duration of exposure. Mild symptoms sometimes are mistaken for flu.

## SCI OSHA Tips: Seasonal Flu

Source: <http://www.osha.gov>

### Workplace Safety and the Flu

This page includes information for workers and employers about reducing the spread of seasonal flu in workplaces. It provides information on the basic precautions to be used in all workplaces and the additional precautions that should be used in healthcare settings. Healthcare workers in contact with flu exposed patients are at higher risk for exposure to the flu virus and additional precautions are needed. Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has [updated guidance](#) for protecting individuals from seasonal flu. Refer to this page for updates on the most recent seasonal flu vaccine. Each year the vaccine is revised to protect against the



**How to Make the Most of Winter Workouts**

1. Change your mind. Winter isn't just about cold weather; it's a whole new season! Embrace the time of year by sitting down and revisiting your goals, then plan out what you'd like to accomplish during the next few months. We're all so busy these days that time seems to fly, which is why it's important to reflect on our past accomplishments and current goals. It can help you see winter in a new, inspired light.

2. Go out and play! If you can't seem to muster the energy to work out this time of year, try "playing" instead. You can burn quite a few calories playing indoors or out. The best part about playing is that it doesn't feel like working out—though you can still get your heart rate up and have an excellent cardio session. Have a blast in the winter wonderland outside by making snow angels (214 calories burned per hour on average), having a snowball fight (319 calories burned per hour), or even building a snowman (285 calories burned per hour). No snow in your area? Try ice skating—an activity you can do indoors or outdoors. Ice skating can burn more than 450 calories per hour—and it's a blast!

3. Take up a winter sport. If you're a competitive type, why not try a new winter sport? From skiing to snowshoeing, there are many great options that burn mega calories and put a whole new twist on your cold-weather workout plans.

4. Get creative at home. Sure, getting to the gym can be more of a hassle when it is cold outside, but never use snowy weather as an excuse to miss your daily exercise. Instead, work out at home, where it's cozy and warm. Whether you pop in a new workout DVD, invest in a few pieces of fitness equipment or even just use your body weight for a killer workout, exercising at home can be a convenient (and fun!) solution to staying on track. And the best part about working out from your own home? You don't have to worry about sharing a TV with fellow gym goers or possibly catching an illness at the gym. Home really is where the (healthy) heart is.

5. Try something new. There's nothing like signing up for a new class or joining an indoor sports league to get you up and moving during chilly months. By trying something new, you reignite your motivation for fitness, cold weather and all! Whether it's indoor volleyball, a dodgeball league, a bootcamp class or even tennis lessons at a local indoor racquet club, participating in a regular activity that you've paid for (or have teammates counting on you to play in) is a fantastic way to stay active in the winter time. You might even make some new friends or learn some new skills.

6. Set a big goal—and some little goals. If winter weather leaves your motivation to exercise colder than an icicle, heat things up with a challenging, new goal. It can be anything from losing those last 10 pounds, to running a 5K (yes, you can still run outside in the cold) or even doing a full pull-up, but choose a goal that you really want and that will stretch you beyond your comfort zone to reach it. Setting a smart goal that you then break down into smaller, achievable action steps is a great way to start. Instead of focusing on simply working out this winter, this type of goal-setting allows you to focus on the bigger picture—your dreams.

7. Get excited. If you've never been a winter fan, start focusing on what you do love about it and how this time of year provides new opportunities for your fitness and health. From eating delicious in-season produce (oranges, kale, and chestnuts, oh my!), to curling up with a big mug of sugar-free hot cocoa in front of the fireplace after a long workout, there is much to love about winter when you embrace and appreciate it. While there are many great workout options this winter, be sure you always stay safe no matter what you do—especially if you decide to enjoy the winter weather outdoors. But most of all, have fun out there. It's a wonderful time of year—ENJOY IT!

influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common this season.

Pandemic flu remains a concern for employers and workers. A pandemic can occur at any time and can be mild, moderate, or severe. Although the pandemic H1N1 flu in 2009 was considered by CDC to be mild, it created significant challenges for employers and workers and showed that many workplaces were not prepared.

The precautions identified in the resources below give a baseline for infection controls during a seasonal flu outbreak, but may not be enough to protect workers during a pandemic. For additional information on pandemic flu planning, see the OSHA's Safety and Health Topics page: [Pandemic Influenza](#).



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