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FM COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//CG-11//
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SUBJ: WINTER SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

1. ACCORDING TO THE CALENDAR WINTER HAS ARRIVED, HOWEVER, FOR MANY PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, UNSEASONABLY WARM WEATHER CONTINUES TO PREVAIL. WHILE THIS IS A WELCOME RESPITE FOR MANY, IT SHOULD ALSO A CAUSE FOR CONCERN BECAUSE IT AFFORDS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO BECOME COMPLACENT WITH THE NORMAL RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES THAT WE WOULD EMPLOY IF WE WERE FACED WITH TYPICAL WINTER WEATHER. IT IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THIS YEAR TO STRESS THAT PREVENTABLE ACCIDENTS AND POTENTIALLY DEADLY MISHAPS CAN BE ELIMINATED BY ADOPTING A RISK MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE TOWARD OUR DAILY ACTIVITIES, WHETHER WE ARE ON THE JOB OR OFF DUTY. REMAIN VIGILANT NOW SO THAT WE WILL BE BETTER PREPARED TO DEAL WITH WINTER-RELATED RISK FACTORS.

2. PREPARE YOUR VEHICLE FOR WINTER. KEEP YOUR VEHICLE IN TOP OPERATING CONDITION. ALWAYS FILL THE GAS TANK BEFORE TRAVELING, EVEN FOR A SHORT DISTANCE, AND FILL UP LONG BEFORE THE TANK GAUGE APPROACHES EMPTY. A CITIZENS BAND (CB) RADIO AND/OR CELLULAR PHONE CAN BE USEFUL TO YOU OR ANOTHER STRANDED MOTORIST IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY. CLEAR ALL WINDOWS AND LIGHTS OF FROST AND SNOW BEFORE DRIVING AND DRIVE WITH YOUR HEADLIGHTS ON. STOCK YOUR CAR WITH BASIC WINTER DRIVING EQUIPMENT: A SCRAPER AND BRUSH, SMALL SHOVEL, JUMPER CABLES, TOW CHAIN AND A BAG OF SAND OR CAT LITTER FOR TIRE TRACTION. ALSO INCLUDE ROAD FLARES, A BLANKET, HEAVY BOOTS, WARM CLOTHING, FOOD, WATER, AND A FLASHLIGHT WITH BATTERIES.

3. WINTER DRIVING. GETTING STRANDED DURING A WINTER STORM CAN BE A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH. PLAN AHEAD, DRIVE AT A SAFE AND LEGAL SPEED, DRIVE WHILE ALERT AND SOBER, AND BUCKLE UP TO ENSURE THAT YOU MAKE IT TO YOUR DESTINATION SAFELY. IF YOU MUST USE YOUR CAR DURING A STORM PLAN YOUR TRAVEL, SELECTING BOTH PRIMARY AND ALTERNATE ROUTES. TAKE NOTE OF YOUR ODOMETER READING AND COORDINATE IT WITH EXIT NUMBERS, MILEPOSTS, OR CROSSROADS SO IF YOU ARE IN AN ACCIDENT YOU CAN IDENTIFY WHERE YOU ARE AND SUMMON RESPONSE PERSONNEL TO YOUR LOCATION. LET SOMEONE KNOW YOUR TRAVEL ROUTES AND ITINERARY AND WHEN YOU ARRIVE, LET FRIENDS/FAMILY KNOW YOU HAVE ARRIVED SAFELY. CHECK WEATHER INFORMATION ON YOUR RADIO. TRY NOT TO TRAVEL ALONE, AND TRAVEL IN CONVOY (WITH ANOTHER VEHICLE) IF POSSIBLE. DRIVE CAREFULLY AND DEFENSIVELY. WATCH FOR ICE PATCHES ON BRIDGES AND OVERPASSES. IF A STORM WORSENS, SEEK REFUGE IMMEDIATELY. IF YOUR CAR SHOULD BECOME DISABLED, STAY WITH THE VEHICLE, RUNNING YOUR ENGINE AND HEATER FOR SHORT INTERVALS. BE SURE TO "CRACK" A WINDOW TO AVOID CARBON MONOXIDE BUILD-UP. ADDITIONAL SAFETY INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT:

[HTTP://WWW.NSC.ORG/LIBRARY/FACTS/WINTER.HTM](http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/winter.htm)

[HTTP://WWW.NSC.ORG/LIBRARY/FACTS/COLD.HTM](http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/cold.htm)

[HTTP://WWW.PUEBLO.GSA.GOV](http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov) AND CLICK ON "EXTREME COLD PREPARING FOR WINTER."

4. CARBON MONOXIDE. YOU CAN'T SEE OR SMELL CARBON MONOXIDE (CO), BUT AT HIGH LEVELS IT CAN KILL A PERSON IN MINUTES. CO IS PRODUCED WHENEVER ANY FUEL SUCH AS GAS, OIL, KEROSENE, WOOD, OR CHARCOAL IS BURNED. IF APPLIANCES THAT BURN FUEL ARE MAINTAINED AND USED PROPERLY, THE AMOUNT OF CO PRODUCED IS USUALLY NOT HAZARDOUS. HOWEVER, HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE DIE ACCIDENTALLY EVERY YEAR FROM CO POISONING CAUSED BY MALFUNCTIONING OR IMPROPERLY USED FUEL-BURNING APPLIANCES. THIS DANGER HEIGHTENS DURING INCLEMENT WINTER WEATHER WHEN GENERATORS ARE USED INDOORS TO PROVIDE ELECTRICITY DURING POWER OUTAGES. EVEN MORE PEOPLE DIE FROM CO PRODUCED BY IDLING CARS. FETUSES, INFANTS, ELDERLY PEOPLE, AND PEOPLE WITH ANEMIA OR WITH A HISTORY OF HEART OR RESPIRATORY DISEASE CAN BE ESPECIALLY SUSCEPTIBLE. BE SURE TO FOLLOW THIS GUIDANCE:

A. KNOW THE SYMPTOMS OF CO POISONING. AT MODERATE LEVELS, YOU OR YOUR FAMILY CAN GET SEVERE HEADACHES, BECOME DIZZY, MENTALLY CONFUSED, NAUSEATED, OR FAINT. YOU CAN EVEN DIE IF THESE LEVELS PERSIST FOR A LONG TIME. LOW LEVELS CAN CAUSE SHORTNESS OF BREATH, MILD NAUSEA, AND MILD HEADACHES, AND MAY HAVE LONGER TERM EFFECTS ON YOUR HEALTH. SINCE MANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE FLU, FOOD POISONING, OR OTHER ILLNESSES, YOU MAY NOT ASSOCIATE CO POISONING WITH THESE SYMPTOMS.

B. IF YOU EXPERIENCE SYMPTOMS THAT YOU THINK COULD BE FROM CO POISONING GET FRESH AIR IMMEDIATELY. OPEN DOORS AND WINDOWS, TURN OFF COMBUSTION APPLIANCES AND LEAVE THE HOUSE. GO TO AN EMERGENCY ROOM AND TELL THE PHYSICIAN YOU SUSPECT CO POISONING. IF CO POISONING HAS OCCURRED, IT CAN OFTEN BE DIAGNOSED BY A BLOOD TEST DONE SOON AFTER EXPOSURE.

C. PREVENTION IS THE KEY TO AVOIDING CO POISONING. HAVE YOUR FUEL-BURNING APPLIANCES (INCLUDING OIL AND GAS FURNACES, GAS WATER HEATERS, GAS RANGES AND OVENS, GAS DRYERS, GAS OR KEROSENE SPACE HEATERS, FIREPLACES, AND WOOD STOVES) INSPECTED BY A TRAINED PROFESSIONAL AT THE BEGINNING OF EVERY HEATING SEASON. MAKE CERTAIN THAT FLUES AND CHIMNEYS ARE CONNECTED, IN GOOD CONDITION, AND NOT BLOCKED. CHOOSE APPLIANCES THAT VENT THEIR FUMES TO THE OUTSIDE WHENEVER POSSIBLE, HAVE THEM PROPERLY INSTALLED, AND USE AND MAINTAIN THEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH MANUFACTURERS INSTRUCTIONS.

D. DONT IDLE YOUR CAR IN A GARAGE, EVEN IF THE GARAGE DOOR IS OPEN. FUMES CAN BUILD UP VERY QUICKLY IN THE GARAGE AND LIVING AREA OF YOUR HOME. DONT USE A GAS OVEN TO HEAT YOUR HOME, EVEN FOR A SHORT TIME. NEVER USE A CHARCOAL GRILL INDOORS, EVEN IN A FIREPLACE. DONT SLEEP IN ANY ROOM WITH AN UNVENTED GAS OR KEROSENE SPACE HEATER. DONT USE ANY GASOLINE-POWERED ENGINES (SNOW BLOWERS, SMALL ENGINES OR GENERATORS) IN ENCLOSED SPACES. ABOVE ALL, DON'T IGNORE SYMPTOMS, PARTICULARLY IF MORE THAN ONE PERSON IS FEELING THEM. YOU COULD LOSE CONSCIOUSNESS AND DIE IF YOU FAIL TO RESPOND.

E. CONSIDER INSTALLING A CO DETECTOR IN YOUR HOME, BUT NOT AS A REPLACEMENT FOR A SMOKE DETECTOR. KNOW THE DIFFERENCE IN THE SOUND MADE BY YOUR CO DETECTOR AND YOUR SMOKE DETECTOR ALARMS. WHEN THE CO ALARM DOES SOUND, CHECK TO SEE IF ANY MEMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD IS EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS OF POISONING. IF THEY ARE, GET THEM OUT OF THE HOUSE IMMEDIATELY AND SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION. IF NO ONE IS FEELING SYMPTOMS, VENTILATE THE HOME WITH FRESH AIR, TURN OFF ALL POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CO, AND

RESET THE ALARM. THEN MONITOR CO SOURCES AND ALARMS CLOSELY.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT:

[HTTP://WWW.CPSC.GOV/CPSCPUB/PUBS/466.HTML](http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/466.html)

5. HYPOTHERMIA, FROSTBITE AND DROWNING. EXPOSURE TO A COMBINATION OF LOW TEMPERATURES, RAIN, SNOW, AND WIND CAN INCREASE YOUR RISK FOR THESE HEALTH CONCERNS. SKIN FREEZES AT ABOUT 28 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT, AND WET SKIN LOSES 25 TIMES MORE HEAT THAN DRY SKIN. LOW BODY TEMPERATURE - 96 DEGREES OR LOWER - CAN BE FATAL IF UNTREATED. DRESS IN A MANNER THAT WILL KEEP YOU DRY AND WARM. COVER YOUR HEAD AND NECK, EAT A BALANCED DIET AND KEEP MOVING WHEN YOU ARE OUTSIDE. BE CAUTIOUS WHEN AROUND FROZEN BODIES OF WATER. NEVER ASSUME THAT ICE IS STRONG ENOUGH TO HOLD YOU. ICE STRENGTH DEPENDS UPON THICKNESS, SNOW COVER, CHANGES IN TEMPERATURE, DEPTH OF THE WATER UNDER THE ICE, WATER FLOW, CURRENT, WATER LEVEL AND THE PRESENCE OF FISH IN THE AREA. IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING ICE SKATING OR FISHING, AVOID ICE CLOUDED WITH BUBBLES, PARTIALLY SUBMERGED OBJECTS, ICE COVERING MOVING WATER, AND MAN-MADE HAZARDS SUCH AS WHERE ICE HAS BEEN BROKEN OR CUT, ALL OF WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO UNSAFE ICE. NEVER PERMIT SKATING OR ICE FISHING ALONE. ADULTS SHOULD SUPERVISE CHILDREN AND SKATING SHOULD OCCUR WITHIN AN AREA DESIGNATED SAFE BY PUBLIC OFFICIALS. WHEN IN DOUBT, DO NOT GO ON THE ICE. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT:

[HTTP://WWW.NSC.ORG/LIBRARY/FACTS/FRSTBIT.HTM](http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/frstbit.htm)

6. SLEDDING, SKIING, SKATING AND SNOWMOBILING. EACH YEAR OVER 16,000 CHILDREN AGES 5 TO 14 ARE TREATED IN EMERGENCY ROOMS FROM INJURIES INCURRED FROM WINTER SPORTS ACTIVITIES. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE CORRECT EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING FOR THE ACTIVITY CHOSEN, AND THAT YOU ARE PROPERLY CONDITIONED FOR THAT ACTIVITY. BE SURE TO WEAR A HELMET TO PREVENT HEAD INJURIES. TO OBTAIN SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THESE WINTER ACTIVITIES, VISIT THE MLC AND HEADQUARTERS SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WEB SITES AT:

[HTTP://WWW.USCG.MIL/SAFETY](http://www.uscg.mil/safety).

7. COMMANDING OFFICERS AND OFFICERS-IN-CHARGE ARE ENCOURAGED TO SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH UNIT PERSONNEL AND THEIR FAMILIES AT AN ALL-HANDS SAFETY SESSION.

8. COMDT (CG-113) POC IS MR. BERT E. DAVIS, 202-475-5204.

9. INTERNET RELEASE IS AUTHORIZED.

10. RADM PAUL J. HIGGINS, DIRECTOR OF HEALTH AND SAFETY, SENDS.

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