

**CARBON MONOXIDE AWARENESS  
WEEK TO RAISE AWARENESS OF  
KILLER GAS**  
*15th – 19th October 2007*



Carbon monoxide is a silent killer – in the UK alone around 42 people have died and a further 177 have suffered injuries from carbon monoxide related incidents over the last 12 months. Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week aims to raise the profile of carbon monoxide, by focusing on the dangers as well as the simple steps for safety and prevention, the symptoms and where to seek help and advice.

The Carbon Monoxide Consumer Awareness Alliance (COCAA) will be supporting the objectives of Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week by raising awareness through organised events and activities across the country. COCAA was set up this year in response to a government review to raise public perception of the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning. Its members include representatives from energy suppliers through to carbon monoxide alarm manufacturers, trade associations and victim support groups.

At the beginning of the week, COCAA will launch a universal logo that any organisation or company connected with the prevention of carbon monoxide poisoning will be able to use on paperwork, packaging, vehicles, posters and adverts.

“Greater visibility for the logo will ensure increased awareness of the potential risk of carbon monoxide poisoning amongst the general public, ultimately helping to save lives,” comments Dan Caesar, Chairman of COCAA. “Every

death from carbon monoxide poisoning is avoidable and we hope the launch of the logo will take us closer to our 'zero tolerance' target," he added.

**Key COCAA events taking place include:**

- Launch of carbon monoxide awareness logo at the House of Commons on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 8.30am – 10.30am
- COCAA receptions at:  
Northern Ireland Assembly – October 15<sup>th</sup>, 12.30-2.30pm  
National Assembly for Wales – October 17<sup>th</sup>, 5.30-7pm  
Scottish Parliament – October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 6-8pm
- Launch of generic information website  
[www.becarbonmonoxideaware.com](http://www.becarbonmonoxideaware.com)

**Individual COCAA members will also be supporting the week with their own activity to help increase public awareness:**

- CORGI Roadshows visiting regional hotspots in Birmingham, Newcastle, Cardiff, Nottingham, Huddersfield, Sheffield and Leicester
- Powergen and Kidde carbon monoxide alarm giveaways across the country
- Carbon Monoxide Awareness Group event in Huddersfield supported by a visit from Lord McKenzie of Luton
- House of Lords event arranged by Co-Gas Safety

Thousands of leaflets and branded promotional items from balloons to badges and magnetised cards will also be given away during the course of the week.

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**COCAA can offer media-trained spokespeople and authorities across a range of carbon monoxide-related topics. For further information, contact Simon Jarman or Hannah Aspey at Energy Public Relations on 01993 823011, or by email at [simon@energypr.co.uk](mailto:simon@energypr.co.uk) or [hannah@energypr.co.uk](mailto:hannah@energypr.co.uk)**

## **Notes for editors:**

### **1. What is COCAA?**

COCAA is co-ordinated by gas industry safety watchdog CORGI and was established in response to an inquiry in 2006 into the level of awareness of carbon monoxide poisoning in the UK. COCAA aims to be the leading authority on carbon monoxide poisoning awareness and campaigning.

The Alliance consists of all the major energy retailers, representatives across all fuel types, victim support charities and representation for manufacturers of carbon monoxide alarms. COCAA also aims to work closely with the Department of Health, the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Health & Safety Executive in order to achieve optimal results.

### **2. Recognising and treating carbon monoxide poisoning**

#### **What are the symptoms?**

- Severe headaches
- Chest or stomach pains
- Drowsiness
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- General lethargy
- Impaired mental ability
- Pink skin and bright red lips in severe poisoning cases

If you experience any of these symptoms,  
**seek urgent medical attention**

If you suspect you have carbon monoxide poisoning, don't hesitate to visit your GP as soon as possible. Diagnosing carbon monoxide poisoning is not easy because it simulates many other conditions, so do say what you think is wrong.

Ask for either a blood and/or breath sample to be taken without delay. That's because your body's carbon monoxide level will reduce the longer you are away from the contaminated environment, making it harder to detect.

#### **What should you do in an emergency?**

- Remove the victim from the contaminated area immediately
- Place them in the open air
- Give pure oxygen if available
- Keep them at rest – avoiding all exertion
- Call for medical help urgently

**Remember: evacuate, ventilate, communicate**

If you suspect that an appliance is leaking carbon monoxide, turn it off, open all doors and windows and get it checked by a qualified professional as soon as possible.

For further information visit [www.becarbonmonoxideaware.com](http://www.becarbonmonoxideaware.com)

**3. Some carbon monoxide facts:**

- We are poised to see a seasonal rise in the number of carbon monoxide related deaths and incidents as heating systems and fires are re-lit for the Autumn
- Carbon monoxide poisoning can affect anyone, although particularly at-risk groups include children, the elderly, people in rented accommodation and some ethnic minority groups
- Survivors of carbon monoxide poisoning can be left with chronic after-effects such as brain damage for the rest of their lives
- Regional carbon monoxide hotspots include Yorkshire, Wales, the North East and the Midlands
- Incorrect installation and servicing of appliances is often a key factor – for example, it has been conservatively calculated that an illegal gas worker is 32 times more likely to be involved in a serious carbon monoxide incident than a CORGI registered installer