

POINT PLEASANT BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT

Response to Carbon Monoxide Incidents

Standard Operating Guideline

Purpose:

To establish a procedure for locating and mitigating carbon monoxide hazards.

Policy:

The Fire Department shall respond to and investigate all reports of possible carbon monoxide incidents occurring in occupied spaces.

General:

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless, and tasteless gas that is deadly. It is a by-product of combustion. Many appliances such as furnaces, kitchen stoves, hot water heaters, automobiles, etc., can produce Carbon Monoxide. When a faulty device or unusual conditions exist, Carbon Monoxide may be vented into areas where people are present. Carbon Monoxide poisoning may be difficult to diagnose. It's symptoms are similar to that of the flu, which may include headache, nausea, fatigue, and dizzy spells for low levels and convulsions, unconsciousness, and death for high levels.

Procedures for Police Dispatch:

Emergency or non-emergency responses to reports of Carbon Monoxide shall be determined by the following criteria:

Emergency response

- Caller indicates or suspects any signs or symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning.
 - In this event, the dispatcher will advise the caller and all occupants to evacuate the building and await the fire departments arrival
 - Dispatch the Fire Department and First Aid Squad.

Non-Emergency response

- Caller reports a Carbon Monoxide detector activation or suspects there may be Carbon Monoxide present in the building.
 - Dispatch the Fire Department.
- Anytime the dispatcher feels the caller is in jeopardy, he/she can immediately initiate an emergency response, even if the initial dispatch was considered non-emergency.

Procedures for Fire Department:

- All emergency responses shall require full protective clothing and SCBA
- All non-emergency responses shall require full protective clothing, but no SCBA unless the situation calls for them.
- Once the Fire Department arrives on scene, they should first interview the occupant to determine the following:

Note: The interviews should take place outside of any suspected contaminated areas.

- If any occupants are or have been feeling ill.
 - The number and location of any CO detectors which have been activated
 - The location of combustion equipment/appliances.
- After the interview, zero the CO meter in fresh air and comply with all start-up procedures as recommended by the manufacturer of the metering equipment.
 - Take the first reading just inside the doorway to determine initial CO level.
 - If a reading of 35 ppm or greater is detected, the building or effected area shall be evacuated immediately and full protective clothing and SCBA shall be utilized during the investigation.
 - Personnel shall begin monitoring the lower levels of the building and then proceed to the higher levels.
 - Be sure to check all areas, especially areas that include utility spaces, kitchens, and attached garages.
 - Appliance service personnel should be contacted by the occupant to check the proper operation of appliances.
 - New Jersey Natural Gas is an important resource during CO investigations and shall be contacted anytime a gas appliance must be turned off. The Gas Division utilizes a tagging system which insures that problems are corrected before faulty appliances are placed back in service.
 - If a reading of 9 ppm or less is detected
 - Inform the occupant that our instrument did not detect an elevated level of CO at this time.
 - Recommend occupant check their CO detector per manufacturer's recommendations.
 - Advise the occupant to reset the CO detector (if applicable) according to the manufacturer's instructions.
 - Inform the occupant that, if the detector re-activates or they feel there may be a problem, to call 911.

- If a reading above 9 ppm and below 35 ppm is detected:
 - Any reading above 9 ppm shall be considered above normal reading.
 - Occupant shall be informed that an elevated level of CO has been detected.
 - If it is determined that an appliance is malfunctioning and thereby producing CO, it shall be shut down and New Jersey Natural Gas shall be notified to respond.
 - Once the premises has been ventilated and reduced to a safe level of CO, it may be occupied, at the discretion of the occupant.
 - Advise the occupant to reset the CO detector (if applicable) according to the manufacturer's instructions.
 - Inform the occupant that, if the detector re-activates or they feel there may be a problem, to call 911.

- If a reading of 35 ppm or greater is detected:
 - Any reading above 9 ppm shall be considered above normal reading.
 - Occupant shall be informed that an elevated level of CO has been detected.
 - If it is determined that an appliance is malfunctioning and thereby producing CO, it shall be shut down and New Jersey Natural Gas shall be notified to respond.
 - Once the premises has been ventilated and reduced to a safe level of CO, it may be occupied, at the discretion of the occupant.
 - Advise the occupant to reset the CO detector (if applicable) according to the manufacturer's instructions.
 - Inform the occupant that, if the detector re-activates or they feel there may be a problem, to call 911.
 - Perform any other actions which may be necessary.