



# NEWS from STATE FIRE



NEW YORK STATE  
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David A. Paterson, Governor

Floyd A. Madison, State Fire Administrator

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FOR RELEASE:  
IMMEDIATE, Friday  
December 10, 2010

## STATE FIRE ISSUES SAFETY ALERT: SNOW INCREASES CARBON MONOXIDE HAZARD

The New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) today issued a Safety Alert advising homeowners and businesses throughout New York State that heavy snowfall and drifting snow may create a new hazard: carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, dangerous gas, commonly known as CO.

State Fire Administrator Floyd A. Madison said that with the recent onslaught of lake-effect snows in western, central and northern portions of New York State, local fire agencies have reported an increase in calls about carbon monoxide detectors going off in homes. Madison said that the reason for these calls is that high snow drifts may be blocking furnace vents and air intakes in some homes, particularly those that have newer high-efficiency furnaces.

“New, high efficiency furnaces vent out the side of a house rather than up through the roof,” Madison said. “This type of venting and air intake must be kept free and clear of snow. If it plugs up, the carbon monoxide would go back into the home. This is why the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control is issuing this warning.”

The State Fire Administrator said that some areas of New York State have received more than three feet of snow in the last week. Many newer high efficiency furnaces have an automatic device that shuts off the furnace when the vents are blocked, but not all of them. First responders say it is important to keep a three-foot area clear around the vent and intake tubes.

The New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control advises all New Yorkers affected by the recent heavy snows to inspect the area around their furnace and hot water heater vents to ensure that snow and ice are not blocking the efficient and safe operation of these fuel burning devices. Homeowners should keep a three-foot area around the vents clear of snow, shrubs, or other potential obstructions.

If your CO alarm sounds, evacuate all family members to a safe location and call your local fire department, Madison said.

Additional information on carbon monoxide may be found at:

<http://www.dos.state.ny.us/fire/COtoolkit.htm>

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