2013-14 HEATING ADVICE TO STAY SAFE AND SNUG AND SAVE MONEY

Don't like the thrill of the chill? Make warm the norm this winter.

Fuel to heat our homes can mean high bills. And heating increases the risks of fire, explosion and carbon monoxide poisoning. But a heating system that works efficiently can mean more warmth, more safety—and more money left for other things.

The Evansville-Vanderburgh County Building Commission, Evansville Fire Department, Vanderburgh County township fire departments, American Red Cross, Vectren Corp. and your local heating and air conditioning contractors want to alert the citizens of Evansville and Southwestern Indiana to the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning, fire and explosion from a malfunctioning furnace, a blocked flue or chimney, a broken gas line or inadequate air for combustion.

There could be hidden damage to your furnace, gas piping, flue or chimney. We are recommending that all citizens have their furnaces, space heaters, ranges, water heaters, gas lines, chimneys, flues and other heating equipment checked by a licensed heating contractor without delay. (You should do this every year.) You will protect yourself and your family this winter and **save on heating bills**.

Carbon monoxide replaces the oxygen in the air we breathe when fuel-burning equipment is operating and the vent or chimney is obstructed or there is not enough air to let the equipment burn fuel efficiently. Carbon monoxide is odorless, colorless and tasteless and catches its victims unaware, sometimes as they sleep. If you suspect a carbon monoxide problem, leave your home and call 911 or your local fire department.

Families in Evansville and across the country have been killed by carbon monoxide poisoning, and many others have become seriously ill. Symptoms may be similar to the flu, including headache, dizziness, nausea and shortness of breath. There may be fatigue and confusion. **That's if you're lucky: You may go to sleep and never wake up.**

Always use portable generators **outdoors**, far away from the home and any openings. Candle fires also have killed families. Be careful using candles during power outages and other times! And make a family fire escape plan.

Help alert your family with carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors, available at all hardware stores, home centers and department stores. Regularly test detectors and change the batteries.

THEY CAN HELP

Evansville Urban Enterprise Association offers **free** carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors, while supplies last, to residents of the Enterprise Zone and the service areas outside the zone who have not received them in the past. Phone 426-2490.

Community Action Program of Evansville (CAPE) handles the Indiana Weatherization Assistance Program in Vanderburgh, Posey and Gibson counties. (Every county in Indiana has an agency for the weatherization program.) CAPE will repair or replace faulty heating equipment and make other energy-efficient improvements. CAPE also can help with heating bills. CAPE has income limits. Phone 492-3925.

Memorial Community Development Corp. offers an emergency home repair program. A maximum grant of $5,000 will cover repairs urgently needed to protect the occupants. The home must be occupied by the owner, and there are income limits. Phone 402-5530.

Energizing Indiana and **Vectren Corp.** have details on **free** home energy assessments and energy-saving products, income-qualified weatherization and **rebates** for purchases of qualifying furnaces, water heaters and other equipment. Phone 1-888-446-7750 or visit EnergizingIndiana.com or VectrenLiveSmart.com.

Handy Chore Program (like the old Handyman Program) will change furnace filters, install smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors, provide fire extinguishers, make some windows and doors weathertight, repair storm doors and outer doors and pump out flooded basements. Handy Chore serves homeowners who are disabled or who are at least age 60. Phone SWIRCA & More at 464-7817.

Also, **faith-based organizations**, **social agencies** and **township trustees** may be able to help make your heating system safer and help with heating bills.