

September 26, 2006

<b>DIRECTIVE:</b>	<b>JOB CORPS INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 06-12</b>
-------------------	---

**TO:** ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF  
ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL DIRECTORS  
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS  
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS  
ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS

**FROM:** ESTHER R. JOHNSON, Ed.D.  
National Director  
Office of Job Corps

**SUBJECT:** Best Practices for Checking Carbon Monoxide Detection

1. Purpose. To communicate best practices for protection against the human health hazards of Carbon Monoxide (CO).
2. Background. Job Corps recently experienced an incident in which a carbon monoxide detector sounded in a dorm. The center had taken measures to ensure the system was working after another incident where students were exposed and treated for CO poisoning. Nationwide, these incidents are not uncommon. Each year, more than 250 people die and 10,000 seek medical attention after accidental CO poisoning, primarily because they don't recognize the warning signs of exposure or their residence is among the 80 percent of U.S. homes that do not have a CO alarm.

Job Corps centers that utilize gas-burning furnaces, water heaters, stoves, or other fuel-burning appliances have the potential for CO exposure that could pose a human health hazard.

3. Preventive Measures. As cold weather approaches and use of fuel-burning appliances increases, the National Office of Job Corps recommends that centers take the following preventive measures:
  - a. Be sure a qualified technician inspects fuel-burning appliances at least once each year. Fuel-burning appliances such as furnaces, hot water heaters, and stoves require yearly maintenance. Over time, components can become

damaged or deteriorate. A qualified technician can identify and repair problems with fuel-burning appliances.

- b. Be alert to danger signs that signal a CO problem, such as:
  - (1) streaks of carbon or soot around the service door of fuel-burning appliances;
  - (2) the absence of a draft in chimneys;
  - (3) excessive rusting on appliance jackets or pipes that convey flame, smoke, or hot gases;
  - (4) moisture collecting on the windows and walls of furnace rooms;
  - (5) fallen soot from fireplaces;
  - (6) small amounts of water leaking from the base of chimneys, vents, or pipes that convey flame, smoke, or hot gases; or
  - (7) damaged or discolored bricks at the top of chimneys or rust on the portion of vent pipes visible from outside.
- c. Be aware that CO poisoning may be the cause of flu-like symptoms such as headaches, tightness of chest, dizziness, fatigue, confusion, and breathing difficulties. Because CO poisoning often causes a victim's blood pressure to rise, the victim's skin may take on a pink or red cast tone.
- d. The National Office of Job Corps recommends installing an Underwriters Laboratory (UL)-listed CO detector outside sleeping areas. A UL-listed CO detector will sound an alarm before dangerous levels of CO accumulate. CO indicator cards and other devices are also intended to detect elevated levels of CO, but most are not equipped with an audible alarm and cannot wake you at night when most CO poisoning incidents occur.
- e. Know how to respond to a CO detector alarm. If the alarm sounds, immediately open windows and doors for ventilation. If anyone in the area is experiencing symptoms of CO poisoning (headache, dizziness, or other flu-like symptoms) immediately evacuate the area and notify the fire department. If no one is experiencing these symptoms, continue to ventilate, turn off fuel-burning appliances, and call a qualified technician to inspect the heating system and appliances as soon as possible. Because you have provided ventilation, the CO buildup may have dissipated by the time help responds and the problem may appear to be temporarily solved. Do not, however, operate any fuel-burning appliances until you have clearly identified the source of the problem. A CO detector alarm indicates elevated levels of CO in the area. Never ignore the alarm!
- f. Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully before installing a CO detector. Do not place the detector within five feet of household chemicals. If your detector is wired directly into your center's electrical system, you should test it

monthly. If your unit operates off of a battery, test the detector weekly and replace the battery at least once a year.

- g. CO monitors should be placed no higher than four feet from the ground (normal breathing zones). This is to ensure potential detection of actionable levels of CO.
  - h. Avoid placing your CO detector directly on top of or directly across from fuel-burning appliances. These appliances will emit some CO when initially turned-on.
  - i. Never use charcoal or gas grills inside a dorm, tent, camper, garage, or any other unventilated area.
  - j. Do not leave fuel-burning vehicles running in an enclosed garage.
4. Action. Addressees are to ensure that a copy of this Information Notice is distributed to all safety officers, wellness managers, and worker's compensation coordinators and other appropriate staff.
5. Expiration Date. Until superseded.
6. Inquiries. Inquiries should be directed to Marsha Fitzhugh at (202) 693-3099 or [fitzhugh.marsha@dol.gov](mailto:fitzhugh.marsha@dol.gov).