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# Press Release

## **MG&E Warns Customers About Carbon Monoxide**

Carbon monoxide detectors save lives.

**Middleborough, December 8, 2005:** One Massachusetts family is lucky to be alive this week. Last week, the Carlton Family of Ashland became ill when their furnace malfunctioned, sending poisonous carbon monoxide gas into their home while they slept. When everyone was sick the next morning and even their dog, Lucky, collapsed, they got to a hospital just in time. They discovered later that the batteries in their CO detector had died.

"In this case, dead batteries could have cost lives," said Sandy Richter, Public Communication Manager for the Middleborough Gas & Electric Department. "While this story is still fresh in people's minds, we want to remind our customers that carbon monoxide is a very real threat, especially in the heating season." MG&E management is recommending that everyone install and maintain a carbon monoxide detector in homes that heat with fuel-burning appliances. That includes oil, natural gas, propane and wood.

CO is a poisonous gas produced when any fuel is burned. It is invisible, odorless and tasteless, and can quickly be fatal at high levels. CO poisoning is often caused by malfunctioning fuel-burning appliances such as furnaces or heaters, or by blocked exhaust vents.

With the passage of "Nicole's Law," all residences in Massachusetts are required to have carbon monoxide (CO) detectors before they can be sold or rented. CO detectors alert occupants if there is a buildup of the deadly gas in the home. Homeowners may need more sensitive models if their family includes children, seniors, or those with chronic illness. The alarm should have a continuous power supply – either batteries or hard-wired with a battery backup. Depending on the model, alarms should be replaced every two to five years. Homeowners should install detectors near bedrooms, at least five feet above the floor or on the ceiling, because CO is lighter than air and often rises. Place one on each

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floor in an open area, but keep them away from fireplaces or flame-producing appliances where normal CO production may cause false alarms.

If your alarm goes off, shut off all appliances, open windows and doors, and check everyone for symptoms such as headache, nausea, dizziness, confusion and fainting. If you suspect exposure, get everyone outside immediately and call the Fire Department from a neighbor's house. For more CO safety guidelines and updates, visit the state Department of Fire Safety at [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs), the Consumer Product Safety Commission at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov), and Underwriters Laboratories at [www.ul.com](http://www.ul.com).

The Middleborough Gas & Electric Department is a publicly owned municipal utility, providing service to customers in a one hundred square mile area in Middleborough and Lakeville.