



## NEWS RELEASE

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# THE GAS COMPANY REMINDS CUSTOMERS NOT TO USE OVENS OR BARBEQUES TO STAY WARM THIS WINTER

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 4, 2011 – Southern California Gas Company (The Gas Company) is urging customers not to use their ovens, ranges or outdoor barbecues to heat their homes because these appliances are not designed for such use and pose a severe and potentially fatal risk of carbon monoxide poisoning if used for space heating.

Over the weekend, a family in southern California was reported to have used an oven to try to stay warm in the cold temperatures, resulting in the deaths of two people from carbon monoxide poisoning. This tragic incident is a reminder that carbon monoxide poisoning can be fatal, but can be prevented through proper use, installation and maintenance of natural gas appliances.

The utility offers furnace safety checks at no cost to customers, or customers can call a licensed, qualified professional to ensure their appliances are operating properly. To schedule an appointment for a furnace inspection by The Gas Company, visit [www.socalgas.com/service](http://www.socalgas.com/service) or call toll-free at (800) 427-2200 or (800) 342-4545 in Spanish.

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Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that is formed when carbon-based fuels, such as kerosene, gasoline, propane, natural gas, oil, charcoal or wood, are burned with inadequate amounts of oxygen, creating a condition known as incomplete combustion. When incomplete combustion occurs, carbon monoxide is produced, and this can potentially lead to carbon monoxide poisoning to a family.

The early stages of carbon monoxide poisoning produce unexplained flu-like symptoms, such as headaches, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath and mental confusion. Since carbon monoxide displaces the oxygen in the blood, prolonged exposure to carbon monoxide can lead to death.

**Signs that may indicate the presence of carbon monoxide:**

- A yellow, large and unsteady gas appliance burner flame.
- An unusual pungent odor when the appliance is operating. This may indicate the creation of aldehydes, a by-product of incomplete combustion.
- Unexplained nausea, drowsiness and flu-like symptoms.

**What to do if someone suspects carbon monoxide is present in their home:**

- If safe to do so, immediately turn off the suspected gas appliance.
- Evacuate the premises and call 911.
- Seek medical attention if anyone in the home experiences possible carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms.
- Contact The Gas Company or a licensed, qualified professional immediately to have the appliance inspected.
- Don't use the suspected appliance until it has been inspected, serviced and determined to be safe by The Gas Company or a licensed, qualified professional.

[Southern California Gas Co.](#) has been delivering clean, safe and reliable natural gas to its customers for more than 140 years. It is the nation's largest natural gas distribution utility, providing safe and reliable energy to 20.7 million consumers through nearly 5.8 million meters in more than 500 communities. The company's service territory encompasses approximately 20,000 square miles in diverse terrain throughout Central and Southern California, from Visalia to the Mexican border. The Gas Company is a regulated subsidiary of Sempra Energy (NYSE: SRE). Sempra Energy, based in San Diego, is a Fortune 500 energy services holding company. To learn more, go to [www.socalgas.com](http://www.socalgas.com).

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