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Indoor Air Quality in Tribal Communities Newsletter

The Dangers of Carbon Monoxide

What is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death if inhaled. Every year, more than 400 people die in the US from accidental CO poisoning.

Carbon monoxide is found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by small gasoline engines, stoves, generators, lanterns, and gas ranges, or by burning charcoal and wood. Carbon monoxide from these sources can build up in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. People and animals in these spaces can be poisoned and can die from breathing CO.

How to Recognize CO Poisoning.

Exposure to CO can cause loss of consciousness and death. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. People who are sleeping or who have been drinking alcohol can die from CO poisoning without experiencing symptoms.



Important CO Poisoning Prevention Tips.

- Install a CO alarm in your home.
- Never use a gas range or oven to heat a home.
- Never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a garage.
- Never run a motor vehicle, generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine outside an open window, door, or vent where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area.

About Us:

Mansel A. Nelson,
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Mansel joined ITEP in 1998. He is the program Manager for the Tribal Environmental Education Outreach Program and the Indoor Air Quality in Tribal Communities Program. Prior to joining ITEP Mansel was a chemistry teacher on the Navajo Nation and a chemical officer in the US Army.

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Graylynn Hudson,
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Graylynn rejoined ITEP in December 2010 to assist with the Environmental Education Outreach Program's efforts to increase awareness of the environmental issues facing tribal communities.

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- Never run a generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed space, even if the doors or windows are open, unless the equipment is professionally installed and vented.
- Keep vents and flues free of debris, especially if winds are high. Flying debris can block ventilation lines.
- Never use a charcoal grill, hibachi, lantern, or portable camping stove inside a home, tent, or camper. If conditions are too hot or too cold, seek shelter with friends or at a community shelter.
- If CO poisoning is suspected seek fresh air and consult a health care professional right away.

IAQTC Website

[nau.edu/iaqtc](http://www.nau.edu/iaqtc)

IAQTC Newsletter

email

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For more information on carbon monoxide, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/cofacts.asp>.

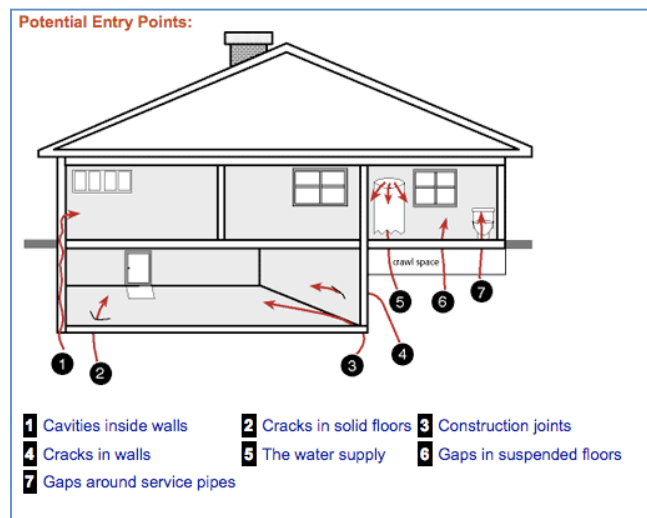
Test for Radon Gas to Protect Health

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is encouraging Americans to take steps to test homes and schools for harmful levels of radon gas. Radon, a colorless odorless gas, is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. Radon can seep into a home or school from underground and if left to accumulate, high levels of radon can cause lung cancer. Improving indoor air quality by increasing awareness of environmental health risks, such as radon gas, supports healthier homes and communities. Approximately 21,000 Americans die from radon related lung cancer each year.

Follow these steps to protect yourself and your family from radon gas in your home or school:

- **Test:** EPA and the U.S. Surgeon General recommend that all homes, both with and without basements, be tested for radon. Affordable Do-It-Yourself radon test kits are available at home improvement and hardware stores and online or a qualified radon tester can be hired.
- **Fix:** EPA recommends taking action to fix radon levels above 4 Picocuries per Liter (pCi/L). Addressing high radon levels often costs the same as other minor home repairs.
- **Save a Life:** By testing and fixing for elevated levels of radon in your home, you can help prevent lung cancer while creating a healthier home and community.

The EPA National Radiation and Indoor Environments Lab in Las Vegas will provide bulk radon test canisters and analytical lab services at no cost for tribal communities. For more information, visit the IAQTC website at: http://www4.nau.edu/itep/iaqtc/iaqtc_radon.asp



For more information on radon and radon testing go to <http://www.epa.gov/radon/>. The IAQTC staff are developing a webinar on radon. Additional information about the webinar will be available on the IAQTC website or list-serve.

Free Training on Developing Sustainable Tribal Housing

The National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) is providing a two-day course exploring sustainable building strategies for housing developments in Indian Country. The course is designed to inspire participants to consider energy efficient and sustainable designs. The first day of training will include a series of topics that describe the value of using sustainable building techniques, including practical examples of successful sustainable build projects in Indian Country. Topics on the second day will provide students with the nuts and bolts of building using sustainable methodology and products. Specific sustainable building materials and methods will be discussed and alternative power sources will be explored. Other topics to be covered include water conservation, indoor air quality, and building envelope components.

The course is being offered Wednesday, September 26 to Thursday, September 27, 2012 and will be held in Seattle, Washington. The National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) continues to offer a limited number of scholarships for tribal housing staff and housing board/committee members who wish to attend training courses. For more information regarding scholarship eligibility and the application process, contact Carrie Cuch at 202.789.1754 or ccuch@naihc.net.

For more details about the training and for online registration visit <http://www.regonline.com/Register/Checkin.aspx?EventID=1035685>

Strategic Collaboration for Effective Asthma Management in Schools Webinar

The Strategic Collaboration for Effective Asthma Management in Schools webinar will be held on Wednesday, September 12, 2012, from 2 – 3 p.m. EDT. Hear from leading asthma experts as they discuss best practices for asthma management in schools and how they formed successful collaborations with key partners to expand the reach of their comprehensive school-based asthma management programs. Register at <https://www3.gotomeeting.com/register/606139070>

Arizona American Indian Air Quality and Asthma Triggers Conference

The Arizona American Indian Asthma Coalition presents the First Arizona American Indian Air Quality and Asthma Triggers Conference at the Northern Arizona University duBois Conference Center in Flagstaff, AZ from 8:30am - 4:30pm on October 25, 2012.

Who Should Attend?

- School staff, district administrators, maintenance directors, and school nurses.
- Preschool Administrators
- Community Health Representatives
- Tribal Leaders
- Environmental health staff, health educators

- Health directors and clinic staff involved in the treatment of asthma.

For more information visit the IAQTC website or contact Mansel Nelson at mansel.nelson@nau.edu.

Clean, Green and Healthy Tribal Schools

The USEPA Region 8 hosted a Clean, Green and Healthy Tribal Schools webinar series for six weeks starting in January 2012. The goal of the webinar series was to provide information and tools for tribal school administrators, risk managers, educators, health and safety coordinators, school health professionals, building managers, tribal environmental protection personnel, parents of school children, and communities, to ensure that tribal schools are clean, green and healthy for themselves, school children and their community. Topics included:

- School Chemical Cleanout
- Polychlorinated Biphenyls in Ballasts and Caulk
- Asbestos
- Lead Repair Renovation and Painting Rule
- Integrated Pesticide Management
- Green Cleaning
- Recycling
- Composting and Gardening
- Indoor Air
- Energy and Water Conservation

The webinars are available at <http://www.epa.gov/region8/tribalschools/>

USEPA's IAQ Tribal Strategy and Plan

A draft Tribal Strategy and Plan is available for review and comment. The priorities and recommendations in the draft plan were developed with the help of tribes with significant experience dealing with indoor air quality and/or specific radiation concerns. All tribal staff are invited to review the draft plan and provide comments on the priorities, recommendations, and specific suggestions on actions EPA can take to improve the plan. The purpose of the Plan is to:

- Optimize EPA's radiation and indoor air programs' limited resources;
- Increase collaboration across EPA and its Regional Offices; and,
- Increase responsiveness to tribes.

A copy of the draft plan is available at <http://www.epa.gov/iaqtribal/>