



The CAREGIVER CONNECTION

Summer/Fall 2011

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Welcome!

This electronic newsletter was established as a vehicle to reach all the licensees of Residential Care Facilities within the San Ramon Valley and is produced quarterly by the RCF Working Group. You will notice that many of the articles, ideas and comments

were written by your counterparts, actual licensees from the facilities. The purpose of this is to address real concerns that are real to YOU; share ideas, successes and failures so we all can learn from one another and to share our resources. We hope this is a beneficial tool for you and your staff.

Debbie Vanek, Code Compliance Officer
San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District

Important Information

Emergency - 911

Fire (non-emergency)

(925) 838-6640

Police (non-emergency)

Alamo (925) 646-2441

Danville (925) 820-2144

San Ramon (925) 973-2779

Information & Referrals - 211

County Connection

(925) 938-7433

CCC Ombudsman

(925) 685-2070

Community Care Licensing

(650) 266-8800

Crisis Intervention

(800) 833-2900

Grief Counseling

(800) 837-1818

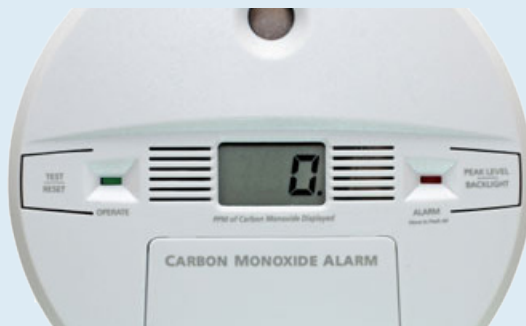
Suicide Prevention

(800) 273-TALK (8255)

San Ramon Senior Center

(925) 973-3250

Carbon Monoxide Alarms Save Lives



A new law went into effect on July 1, 2011, requiring homeowners to install carbon monoxide detectors in all single-family California homes with an attached garage, fireplace or a fossil fuel-burning heater or appliance. Nationwide, carbon monoxide poisoning claims about 480 lives every year and sends another 20,000 people to the hospital.

“Carbon monoxide is a silent killer,” said Christina Jamison, Fire Marshal. “You can’t

see it or smell it, but at high levels, it can kill a person in just minutes.”

Carbon monoxide (CO) is produced whenever any fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood or charcoal is burned. If the appliances that burns the fuel are properly used and maintained, the amount of CO produced is generally not hazardous. However, improper use of appliances can result in deadly levels of CO. Hundreds of people die every year from CO poisoning caused by malfunctioning or improperly used fuel-burning appliances. Even more die from the CO produced by idling cars.

“Even though the detectors will alert residents to the presence of CO, people need to know the symptoms of CO poisoning so they can act quickly and early,” said Jamison. “At moderate levels of CO, the symptoms include severe headaches, dizziness, nausea, fainting and mental confusion. Many of these same symptoms are milder at lower levels of CO.”

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USE IT, OR LOSE IT!



As the body ages, it goes through many changes. Lack of physical exercise can lead to muscular weakness. This is why it is so important for the elderly to maintain healthy blood circulation to keep cardiovascular systems in shape. We always think the elderly are frail and tire easily so they should be exempt from doing regular exercises, but that is not the case. Simple exercises such as moving of the arms, shoulders, legs, and head are perfect examples of easy, low-impact, movements that can be very effective. Another basic way to wake up tired muscle is by gentle massage; rubbing residents hands, arms or shoulders is a great way to engage the muscles after being sedentary. Plus everyone loves a warm touch.

Residents who regularly participate in a physical activity show greater improvement compared to those who are inactive or sit all day. This

helps reduce joint pain and gives strong balance to lessen the risk of falling. For anyone who is inactive, it's never too late to slowly begin an exercise or activity program.

As a precaution, always ask their doctors about any physical limitations they may have. There are several exercise programs available at local stores, on the internet or at the library. As the saying goes..."Use it or lose it!"

Gerlita Del Castillo, Golden Hills Home Care

WHERE THERE IS SMOKE, THERE COULD BE FIRE

Sometime ago, one of our care homes was suddenly filled with thick white smoke. Not knowing where the smoke was coming from our lead caregiver immediately contacted the Licensee and grabbed the fire extinguisher. The lead caregiver was instructed to first, "call the Fire Department right now"; second, to turn off the furnace and finally to ensure that all residents were safe and prepared to be evacuated if needed.

A few minutes later the Fire Department was on scene and we learned the cause of the smoke was from an overheated furnace located in the garage. The smoke was being blown through the air ducts in the attic and eventually into the home via the floor vents. After further investigation it was confirmed that many of the floor registers were blocked by sofas or other furniture. Although we did not have a fire, if the furnace had not been shut off quickly, this story may have had a very different ending.

Lesson(s) from our experience:

- Keep heating/air conditioning vents open.
- Always control the temperature in your care home using the THERMOSTAT settings. If necessary adjust vent openings slightly, but never close them fully.
- Never cover vents with furniture, clothing or other items.
- Be Ready – always call the Fire Department if you see or smell smoke.
- Furnaces should be cleaned and checked every six months.
- Conduct a Fire Drill at your facility on a regular basis.

Contributed by Dcn Joe Sicat, Co-Administrator
BEATITUDES MISSION HOMES of Northern California

(Carbon Monoxide cont...)

Heaters, fireplaces, furnaces and many other types of appliances and cooking devices produce the colorless, odorless gas.

"A recent study found that almost 90 percent of California homes don't have carbon monoxide detectors," said Jamison. "Having a detector is a very small investment that can protect the lives of the people you love."

While individual homeowners must install the CO detectors by July 1, owners of multi-family leased or rental dwellings have until January 1, 2013 to comply with the law. For more information on the law and CO detectors, residents can contact their local Building and Safety department, or go to the National Fire Protection Association's website.

Below are some simple tips to prevent CO poisoning:

- Don't use a gas oven to heat your home, even for a short time.
- Don't idle the car in the garage, even if the outside door is open.
- Never use a charcoal grill indoors.
- Don't ignore symptoms, especially if more than one person is feeling them.
- Have your fuel-burning appliances regularly serviced by a professional.

Note: check manufacturers instructions for placement of your CO detector.

Help keep Residential Care Facilities free from Chemical Restraints

As discussed in the Fall 2010 issue of The Caregiver Connection, tending to those living in residential care homes can be very stressful. In these settings staff must deal with residents who are uncooperative or restless, have impaired memory, poor self-care, and/or insomnia. These issues play havoc on the relationship between staff and their residents. While the age and diminishing health of the resident are the key contributors to this strained relationship, at no time is the resident at fault. Granted, this fact doesn't make it any easier for those charged with the care of this fragile group, so what can be done to ease the stress in this situation?

Sadly, this issue exists throughout the United States and some facilities have handled these circumstances by utilizing psychoactive drugs to manage or sedate these challenging behaviors. According to the California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform (CANHR), chemical restraints are drugs used to control a person's behaviors when other forms of care are more appropriate. Psychoactive drugs, which affect emotions or behavior, are often used for this purpose. These drugs are not considered chemical restraints when used for the proper treatment of a mental illness such as depression or schizophrenia. Psychoactive drugs are chemical restraints when they are prescribed to control an individual's behavior without adequate medical justification.

The dangers associated with chemical restraint are just as severe as those associated with physical restraint. Misuse and overuse of psychotropic drugs may result in overdose, malnutrition and dehydration, the inability to feel pain, brain injury, bed sores and other skin conditions, chemical dependence, choking, and death."



Note: It is important that caregivers administering medications work closely with doctors on behavioral concerns and dosing requirements.

Here are a few suggestions, offered by CANHR:

Ask the doctor to assess possible medical causes of behavioral concerns. Agitation

and confusion may be caused by untreated infections, dehydration, malnutrition, adverse medications reactions, pain, and other problems.

Improving or simplifying the environment can relieve resident anxiety.

Work with families to determine what type of activities their loved one enjoys, such as walks, group activities, visits from pets, music, and so on.

- ✓ Provide adequate staffing for the benefit of the residents and caregivers.
- ✓ Eliminate distracting noises like intercoms and buzzer systems.
- ✓ Temperatures should be comfortable.
- ✓ Encourage family members to help decorate and furnish their loved one's room to make it more comfortable.
- ✓ Encourage patience and understanding. Common symptoms of dementia such as restlessness, pacing and repeated questions should be expected and accepted.

To be an effective, healthy and happy caregiver, it is important to take care of yourselves and each other! It is the intention of The Caregiver Connection to not only enhance the quality of life for the residents living within the San Ramon Valley, but to support the staff faced with this difficult, but rewarding, occupation.

Donna Maxwell
RCF Working Group,
San Ramon Valley Fire (Volunteer)



Quick Tip... **POLST**

For many years, a “Do Not Resuscitate” or DNR order was the only way that patients could communicate wishes concerning end-of-life care. In 2009, a new program was launched in California to enhance patient choices, the Physician’s Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) program. [Read More...](#)

Joseph Barger, MD
CCC EMS Medical Director

Residential Care Facility Working Group

- Sylvia Sicat, Beatitudes Mission Home
- Valerie Dahl - Nevarez, Stamm Care Homes
- Amy Libao, Tri-Valley Personal Home Care Service
- Gina Licup, Trinity & Valle Verde Care Homes
- Gerlita Del Castillo, Golden Hills Home Care
- Kristine Reyes, Our Ladys Care Home
- Anabelle Galera, Better Living Care Homes
- Donna Maxwell, San Ramon Valley Fire (Volunteer)
- Debbie Vanek, San Ramon Valley Fire
- Joyce Castro, San Ramon Valley Fire

Contact us...

caregiverconnection@srvfire.ca.gov
or (925) 838-6600



Announcements

Upcoming Event

Personal Safety
with the San Ramon PD
Wed. 9/7 @ 10:30 am
for more info contact
the San Ramon
Senior Center.

Free Training

Thursday, August 25
1:30 - 4pm
POLST, Hands Only CPR/
AED, & fire extinguisher
training.
To Register contact Sylvia
Sicat at (925) 833.9477

Join the RCF working group!

Learn how by
contacting Debbie
at (925) 838.6600

Upcoming Event

San Ramon
Valley Emergency
Preparedness Fair
9.10.11
www.bereadysrv.org

Happy Birthday to you!

The San Ramon Senior Center
Celebrates monthly birthdays
on the third Wednesday of
each month...sign-up at the
Senior Center.