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## NEWS RELEASE

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Emergency Management BC  
Office of the Fire Commissioner

### **Province proclaims Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week**

VICTORIA – During British Columbia’s first-ever Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week, the Province urges residents to prevent buildup of the potentially deadly gas in their homes and workplaces.

Carbon monoxide is known as “the silent killer” because it is an invisible, tasteless and odourless gas that can cause serious harm or death. According to the BC Coroners Service, there were 119 carbon monoxide poisoning deaths in the province between 2008 and 2017. In order to encourage awareness and prevention, the Province has proclaimed Nov. 1-7, 2019, as Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week.

Carbon monoxide is produced when fuels such as propane, gasoline, natural gas, heating oil or wood do not burn completely in fuel-burning appliances and devices. This is why it is critical to ensure fuel-burning appliances, chimneys and vents are properly maintained, vented as appropriate and cleaned and inspected annually.

“We must all take this opportunity to learn more about the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning, how to prevent it and how to keep ourselves, our families and our friends safe,” said Jennifer Rice, Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Preparedness. “It’s important to install carbon monoxide alarms that signal when the gas is present and have all fuel-burning appliances in a home or workplace inspected by a licensed contractor every year.”

During Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week, fire departments, educators, government and industry are working together to teach people about the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning, the symptoms and sources, and how to avoid becoming ill.

In the event that carbon monoxide poisoning is suspected, or a carbon monoxide alarm sounds, people must leave their home or workplace immediately and call 911.

#### **Quotes:**

#### **Doug McRae, co-ordinator, lands and permitting, Pacific Northern Gas Ltd. —**

“Pacific Northern Gas Ltd. is very pleased to participate in the first-ever Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week and supports efforts to educate everyone about the hazards of carbon monoxide. We applaud the work of our partners, including Emergency Management BC, the Office of the Fire Commissioner, Technical Safety BC and many others to increase awareness of carbon monoxide, what to do if you think the gas is present and the importance of ventilation and proper maintenance of all appliances burning fossil fuels.”

#### **Catherine Roome, president and CEO, Technical Safety BC —**

“You can protect your family by first knowing the risks and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, and also by ensuring any gas work in your home is done by qualified people who pull the right permits. If, like me, you heat your home with a furnace or boiler, getting those gas appliances serviced using a licensed contractor makes a difference to your safety and your peace of mind.”

**Phil Lemire, president, Fire Chiefs’ Association of British Columbia —**

“The Fire Chiefs’ Association of BC is proud to partner with the Province of BC during Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week. We encourage everyone to learn about the dangers of carbon monoxide. Help keep your family and co-workers safe by installing carbon monoxide alarms.”

**John McMahon, director, safety, training and fleet, FortisBC —**

“Natural gas is a safe and reliable energy source and it is important to keep appliances well maintained to keep it that way. We recommend any natural gas appliance should be installed by a licensed gas contractor and should be serviced annually to minimize any risk of carbon monoxide exposure. Additionally, like smoke detectors in homes, it is also best for customers with natural gas appliances to install carbon monoxide detectors to help keep everyone safe.”

**Learn More:**

Office of the Fire Commissioner: [www.gov.bc.ca/FireSafety/CarbonMonoxideAwareness](http://www.gov.bc.ca/FireSafety/CarbonMonoxideAwareness)

Carbon monoxide safety: [www.COafety.tips](http://www.COafety.tips)

Fire Chiefs’ Association of British Columbia: [www.FCABC.ca](http://www.FCABC.ca)

Fire Prevention Officers’ Association of British Columbia: [www.FPOA.bc.ca](http://www.FPOA.bc.ca)

Fortis BC: [www.fortisbc.com](http://www.fortisbc.com)

Pacific Northern Gas: [www.PNG.ca](http://www.PNG.ca)

Technical Safety BC: [www.technicalafetybc.ca](http://www.technicalafetybc.ca)

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