

BUSINESS

Lifesaving device costs 'less than a meal'

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sleeping area.

Halpern said detectors are not designed to alert residents if extremely low amounts of CO are detected. After all, homeowners don't want a series of false alarms.

"If it is not enough to set the unit off, don't fault the unit," added Halpern, whose company will test all S-Tech detectors free of charge. "Five or six years ago, there was no way to protect yourself from carbon monoxide and a lot of people were complaining of the flu when they could have had symptoms of CO poisoning.

"You pay less for a unit than if you go out for a meal. In that regard, there should never be a single accidental death caused by carbon monoxide poisoning."

DANGERS OF CARBON MONOXIDE: AN INVISIBLE KILLER

■ Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless gas that kills, unless detected early. CO kills by displacing the oxygen in your blood and your body will begin to suffocate from the inside out.

■ Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include headaches, dizziness, nausea, drowsiness and confusion. If there's a possibility you have been breathing in CO, open all doors and windows and call 911.

■ Individuals who are at greatest risk are unborn babies, infants, young children, senior citizens or people with coronary or respiratory problems.

■ All fuel-fired appliances, such as gas appliances, furnaces and hot-water heaters, should be properly maintained and inspected annually. A cracked or worn heat exchanger on the furnace is one of

the most common reasons why CO would escape into the environment.

■ Chimneys and woodburning stove vents should always be clear, and cars should never be warmed up inside the garage, even if the garage door is open. Carbon monoxide can quickly build up and drift into the house.

■ Propane barbecues should never be brought inside or even into the garage. Space heaters also have the potential to release deadly CO fumes.

■ Fire departments have confidence in units that are marked as having been tested by Underwriters' Laboratories, Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada or the Canadian Standards Association.



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Stephen Wong was given top honours by the Association of Chinese Canadian Entrepreneurs.

Immigration key to housing boom

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Wong got his start in the real estate market nearly 30 years ago when he earned his licence and joined the United Trust company. In 1980, he opened the Living Realty operation before beginning to diversify his efforts.

"I originally figured that Canada is a country that has an influx of immigrants, making a lot of opportunities for the real estate market," he said. "That trend especially happened throughout the 1980s and it will continue over the next several years.

"And it won't be just from Asian people and companies, they will be coming to Canada from all over the world and the demand for housing will be great. The industry will still be booming.

Wong, meanwhile, is also president of the Chinese Real Estate Professional Society of Ontario, an organization that started with 10 brokers in 1983, but has grown to more than 2,500 realtors.

He became the third recipient of the Chinese Canadian association's top entrepreneur, following in the footsteps of 1998 winner Alex Yuen, president of Richmond Hill's A&L Computers.

"I believe these awards will develop it into a local community program in order to involve more people," Wong said. "We will develop it into a more widespread program."

"This is very encouraging and will provide something for second generation Chinese Canadians. I think that would be nice.

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