

# Carbon monoxide detectors saving lives: Firefighters

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Carbon monoxide detectors aren't just the law.

They work, Whitchurch-Stouffville's fire chief says.

Rob McKenzie couldn't recall a CO-related death in the municipality during the launch of York Region's carbon monoxide awareness campaign at the Community Safety Village of York Region in Stouffville yesterday.

But Stouffville firefighters have responded to homes where the detectors went off. A vehicle left running in an attached garage or a faulty furnace or fireplace is often to blame.

A worker "went down" in a house under construction in Stouffville after inhaling carbon monoxide spilling from a kerosene heater several years ago, McKenzie said. Firefighters used their own detector to discover very high readings in the home.

Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week is Nov. 1 to 7.

As of Oct. 15, Ontario law requires carbon monoxide alarms be installed in all homes and other residential buildings where there is a carbon monoxide risk. Only some municipalities required them previously.

Carbon monoxide, known as the silent

killer, is produced when fuels such as natural gas, gasoline, oil, propane, wood or coal are burned.

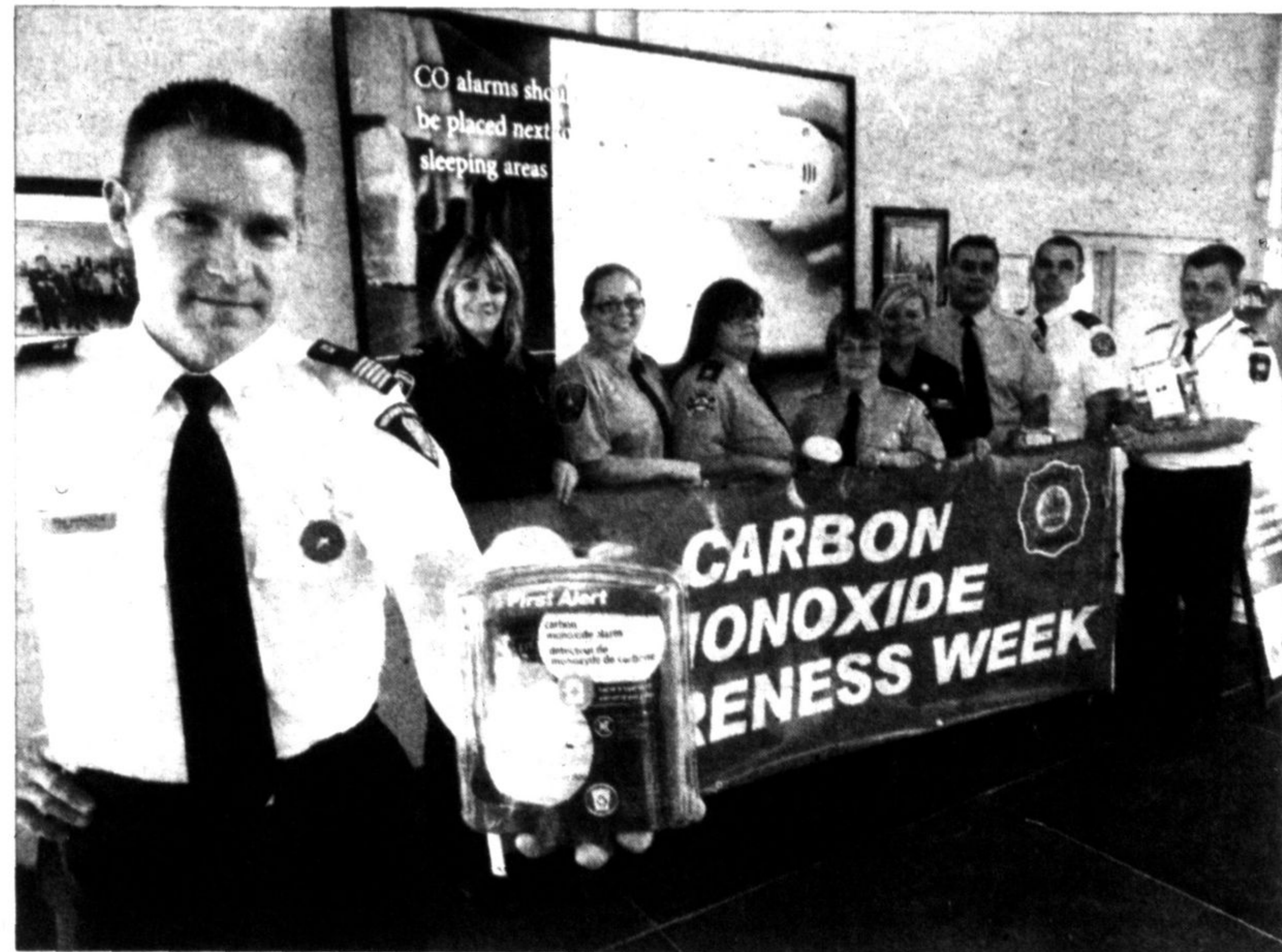
You can't taste, see or smell carbon monoxide, so a detector is the only way to alert you that levels are high.

Carbon monoxide reduces the body's ability to carry oxygen in the blood and exposure can cause headaches, fatigue, dizziness, chest pain and, at high levels, coma or death.

There were 380 unintentional deaths from carbon monoxide in Canada from 2000 to 2009, according to Statistics Canada.

## CO KNOW HOW

- Install at least one CO alarm near sleeping areas.
- It is strongly recommended you have at least one CO alarm on each storey of your home.
- Have a trained professional inspect, clean and tune-up your home's central heating system.
- Fireplaces and wood stoves should also be inspected each year and be cleaned and repaired as needed.
- Never use a gas or charcoal grill inside your home or in a closed garage.
- Portable electric generators must be used outside only; never use them indoors, in a garage or in any confined space that can allow CO to collect.



STAFF PHOTO/JIM MASON

Whitchurch-Stouffville Fire Chief Rob McKenzie (left) and fire educators from across York Region and the Ontario Fire Marshal launched Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week (Nov. 1 to 7) at the Community Safety Village of York Region last Thursday.

**York Region**



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