
Acreage Living

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
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Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisonings

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In the United States over 5000 people per year die from CO (carbon monoxide) poisoning. Thousands more are injured. Some never recover and continue to suffer from memory, hearing, and vision loss; organ damage; and personality changes. Parkinson-like symptoms and Alzheimer's can be caused by exposure to CO. Prevent these needless deaths and long-term disabilities.

- Install CO alarms near all bedrooms.
- Install smoke detectors.



- Have all fuel-burning appliances inspected before the heating season:
 - Gas or oil furnace or boiler,
 - Gas water heater, and
 - Gas stove.

- Ask the inspector to do a combustion

check using a digital CO meter.

- Ask the inspector to do a "worst-case backdrafting test."
- If the appliance inspector doesn't have the equipment for the combustion and "worst-case" tests, find another inspector.
- Install and use an exhaust hood vented to outdoors above a gas kitchen stove.
- Never use the kitchen stove to heat the house! It is not safe, even for emergency heating.
- Never use unvented gas logs to heat the house! They are designed for decorative use only.

If you do use unvented gas logs, use them only briefly. Provide adequate ventilation by opening windows and air out the house after use.

- Never use an unvented gas or charcoal grill indoors.
- Never operate small gasoline engines indoors. Even in large rooms with open windows, CO concentrations from gasoline engines rise quickly to lethal levels.



- Don't warm up vehicles in the garage. Even with the garage door open, CO builds up in the garage and can then enter the home.

- Consult a heating contractor before and after tightening up your house to ensure that there is adequate combustion air for appliances. Without sufficient air, higher amounts of CO are produced and chimneys are more likely to backdraft.

- Consider installation of new high-efficiency appliances that save energy and are designed to vent correctly even in a super-tight house.

- Don't smoke. Cigarette smoke has high concentrations of carbon monoxide. If you do smoke, don't smoke while pregnant. Exposing your unborn



child to CO in your blood will reduce birth weight and increase risk of health problems and possible reduced IQ. Never smoke indoors.

Be aware of CO poisoning and the variety of sources which can produce CO. Nine deaths have been reported on Lake Mead in Arizona on houseboats. The source? CO from the gasoline-powered generators used to power lights and air conditioners. Several in Iowa have been sick and some have died from generator fumes. In the past three years, two Iowans died in tents from CO produced by propane stoves and two more died in their camper when the charcoal in the grill spontaneously re-ignited. Two farmers in northwest Iowa died in their machine shed with a tractor running inside and a mother of two died in her apartment when the furnace failed. Over 50 people, many of them ill, were evacuated from a motel when the swimming pool boiler failed and over 60 people were evacuated from an Iowa

hotel when a new water heater failed.

Some possible signs of carbon monoxide:

- Your entire family is sick with flu-like symptoms.
- Family members feel better when out of the house for several hours.
- There is moisture on the inside of windows (a sign of a plugged chimney).
- The CO alarm has sounded. Take this seriously. CO is colorless, odorless, and tasteless. Three Iowans died when they unplugged their CO alarm.
- Soot, dirt, or rust around the vents (chimneys) of gas appliances.
- Poor combustion (burning) or improper operation of fuel-burning appliances.

Don't wait for Christmas to buy CO alarms for yourself and those you care about. Give the gift of a CO-safe home today.



Rural Package Delivery

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Package delivery in rural areas can pose special challenges when you aren't home and neighbors aren't to lose by. Check with your parcel delivery service to get exact instructions and options for rural delivery. As an example, the customer service department of one major parcel service (UPS) offers this advice for rural customers.

The release of parcels at a residence depends on several conditions. In order for a driver to release a package without obtaining a signature, the delivery must be to a single family dwelling or multiple-family dwelling with a private entrance.

UPS will not driver release packages that are shipped to commercial addresses, apartment/condominium complexes, or packages with an Adult Signature Required label affixed to them.

If delivery is being made to a residential delivery address, the driver has the option of releasing packages. It is ultimately up to the driver's discretion, and packages must be delivered in a safe area, away from public view and protected from the weather.

UPS also offers the following delivery options to the receiver:

Will Call-UPS will hold your package for five business days at your local UPS Customer Counter. It will be available for pickup on the following business day.

Future Delivery-UPS will hold your package for up to 10 business days, and redeliver to the same address or to an alternate address

when someone will be available to sign for the package (Monday through Friday)

Alternate Address—UPS will redeliver your package to an alternate address (work, family member) where a signature may be obtained.

To request one of these options, please call 800-742-5877 prior to 7:00 p.m. your local time after the first delivery attempt is made.

Check with your parcel service for instructions. United Parcel Service policy is listed here as an example. No endorsement of UPS is implied.

Selecting a Tractor for an Acreage

by Mark Hanna, ISU Extension Ag Engineer, Agricultural & Biosystems Engineering

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Jobs on an acreage often require mechanical as well as physical power. For this reason, it's not uncommon for acreage owners to be in the market for a small, utility tractor. Before starting the process, determine what tasks (e.g. mowing, snow removal, light tillage, feeding livestock) the tractor will be used for and some idea on the size of the tasks. If jobs are primarily mowing and some snow removal, a lawn and garden tractor may be adequate for areas up to four or five acres.



Depending on tractor size, your budget, and the local market, new or used tractors may be consid-

ered. If evaluating a new tractor, in addition to comparing features, be sure to consider service and warranty work after the sale. If evaluating a used tractor, start with a visual once-over. Inspect for evidence of coolant or oil leaks and condition of the fluids. Has the frame been repaired? If desired, are 3-point hitch and remote hydraulics present? Are previous service records available? Operate the tractor if possible and check operation of transmission, clutch, gauges, and lights. Because of potential rollover hazards, avoid the purchase of an older tractor without a Roll-Over-Protective-Structure (ROPS).

Fall Lawn Care

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Fall is a busy time for many people. With so much to do, lawn care is sometimes neglected. However, fall lawn care is extremely important. Proper lawn care in the fall helps maintain a healthy, vigorous lawn and can revive a declining lawn. Important fall chores include mowing, fertilization, weed control and aeration.

Mowing

Continue to mow the lawn until the grass stops growing. Kentucky bluegrass and other cool-season grasses usually stop growing in early November in Iowa. Mow bluegrass lawns at a height of 2-1/2 to 3 inches in the fall. When

mowing, never remove more than one third of the total leaf surface at any one time. For example, if your mowing height is 3 inches, mow the grass when it reaches a height of 4-1/2 inches.

Fertilization

Fall is the most important time to fertilize the lawn. Best results are typically achieved by fertilizing once in the spring and twice in the fall. Fall applications can be made in September and early November. September fertilization promotes a moderate rate of shoot growth and helps to thicken the turf. An application in early November (at the time of the last mowing) promotes root

growth and early green up next spring. Apply one pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet in both September and early November.

Broadleaf Weed Control

Perennial broadleaf weeds, such as dandelion and plantain, can be controlled with the application of broadleaf herbicides from mid-September to early November. Most broadleaf herbicide products contain a mixture of two or all of the following chemicals: 2,4-D, MCPP and dicamba.

Fall applications of broadleaf herbicides are more effective and safer than those made in spring or summer. In preparation for winter, perennial weeds translocate carbohydrates (foods) down to their roots in the fall. Broadleaf herbicides applied from mid-September to early November also will be translocated to the weed's roots, resulting in excellent control.

With gardening activities winding down in the fall, the risk of herbicide injury to vegetable and flower gardens, fruits and ornamentals is reduced. Broadleaf herbicides can be applied as liquids or granules. Before applying any pesticide, carefully read and follow label directions.

Aeration

Lawns established on clay soils and those subject to heavy foot traffic would benefit from core aeration. Aeration relieves soil compaction, improves air and water movement into the soil, and helps reduce thatch accumulation. Aerate lawns in September with a machine that has hollow metal tubes or tines. These tubes or tines remove plugs of soil from the ground. Avoid spike-type devices that simply punch holes in the turf. For maximum benefit, the core aerator

should penetrate the soil to a depth of 2 to 3 inches. When finished, there should be approximately 20 to 40 holes per square foot. For the do-it-yourselfer, aeration machines are often available at rental agencies. Aeration services also are available from most professional lawn care companies. After aeration, break up the soil cores by mowing or raking.

Fall is a busy time with school activities, football games and household chores. However, be sure to set aside time for your lawn. An attractive, healthy lawn next year begins with proper care this fall.

* * * *

Lingo Lexicon:

Anaerobic Digester - a device that breaks down organic matter such as manure or plant materials into biogas (a mixture of methane and carbon dioxide) and other byproducts. Sometimes these digesters are called methane digesters. The digester uses anaerobic (without oxygen) bacteria to break down, or digest, the manure. As the bacteria eat the manure, they give off methane gas. This gas can be captured and burned as a fuel to run engines or heat water. The left-over end product from methane digestion usually has considerably less odor than the original manure did, and is used as a fertilizer for crops. The digester structure is usually a large concrete or steel tank. The digester must be sealed to keep oxygen out and methane in. Digesters are expensive to build, usually over \$100,000, and often over \$250,000. For more information on methane digestion, contact your Extension Ag Engineer or visit <http://www.agcom.purdue.edu/AgCom/Pubs/AE/AE-105.html>

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