

For more information contact:  
Deputy Fire Chief Art Zern  
(815) 895-4514

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## CONCERNS INCREASE AS CARBON MONOXIDE DEATH TOLLS RISE

### Keyless Ignition Vehicles Can Be Hazardous

Sycamore, IL. October 2, 2019– The Sycamore Fire Department (SFD) has provided this information in the past; however, we are presenting this important material again because there was another local incident this past week. Luckily, there were no injuries. This past Sunday morning, the SFD responded to a report of a carbon monoxide detector activation in an upstairs bedroom of a local home. Upon arrival, the SFD crew calibrated their air quality monitoring equipment and began to assess the air quality in the home. They quickly found elevated Carbon Monoxide (CO) levels in the home and potentially lethal levels in some areas of the home. When the garage access door was opened, the firefighters were met with heat, a haze in the air and lethal levels of CO. It was determined that the vehicle owner parked the vehicle in the garage the prior evening and clearly didn't push the start/stop button, leaving the vehicle running. The occupant stated that he left the key fob in the vehicle and didn't realize it was still running "because the vehicle runs so quiet". At some point overnight, the vehicle ran out of gas. Thankfully, there were operating CO detectors in the home.

Fire departments around the country are noticing an increased number of deaths related to motor vehicles with keyless ignition. With advanced technology, many new vehicles have the ability to start, run and drive without physically touching an ignition key. This feature can be very convenient, as you don't have to dig into your pockets or purse to find the ignition key.

The way keyless ignition works is by using a key fob that needs to be within a specified distance of the motor vehicle in order for the keyless ignition to work. This distance is regulated by that particular car manufacturer. When that key fob reaches a close enough distance for that motor vehicle to recognize its presence, that vehicle has the ability to perform as any other vehicle would with an ignition key. A simple **START/STOP** button on the dashboard is the only "key" that needs to be activated.

The danger in this feature comes well after you run errands at the grocery store, or pick up your kids from school. What seems to be happening far too often is the owners of the vehicles return to their homes where they park their vehicles in the garage. Not having to turn an ignition key to stop the vehicle, these vehicle owners forget to push the **START/STOP** button on the dashboard. As the vehicle owner heads into the house, they close the garage door and return to their usual home routine; meanwhile, the vehicle remains running in the garage. Many key fobs have an alarm that sounds when the key drifts too far from the vehicle. Sometimes, however, these fobs are left inside the vehicle or on a shelf near the garage that is still within the manufacturer's regulated distance for activation.

The number of Carbon Monoxide (CO) related deaths and injuries due to keyless ignition vehicles is rising due to this simple error. These vehicle owners are later effected by what is known as the "silent killer", Carbon Monoxide. Outcomes ranging from brain damage to death have been the increasingly devastating trend. The Sycamore Fire Department would like to make all vehicle owners aware of these incidents, to help prevent this from happening to you or anyone you may know.

A few reminders that could help protect you and your family from a potentially lethal tragedy:

- Make sure you have working Carbon Monoxide Detectors in your home. Not only will this protect you and your family against motor-vehicle emissions, but it will detect improper emissions from any appliances that burn fossil fuel to function.
- Never run your motor vehicle inside a garage. Whether it is to pre-warm your vehicle during cold weather or to do engine repairs, always run the vehicle outside.
- Don't leave your keyless ignition fob in or near your vehicle. If you always take the fob with you, it will alarm if you leave your vehicle running inadvertently.

For more information on keyless ignition safety or Carbon Monoxide, please contact the Sycamore Fire Department at (815) 895-4514, or visit us on Facebook at City of Sycamore Fire Department for occasional postings.

