

SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA



FROM: Supervisor Jim Venable **SUBMITTAL DATE:** July 30, 2003

SUBJECT: Board support for a report on what Riverside County can do to reduce the potential for carbon monoxide poisoning.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board join with me to direct the Executive Office to form a task force comprised of staff from Community Health Agency, Sheriff's Department, Parks and Open Space, and any other applicable county department or agency to develop a report for this Board on what actions we can take to help reduce the potential for carbon monoxide poisoning in the County. This group should report back to the Board within 60 days.

BACKGROUND: Carbon monoxide is probably the most deadly substance most of us can come in contact with in our daily lives. It is the number one cause of unintentional poisoning deaths in the world. Over 200,000 people suffer carbon monoxide induced heart attacks each year. It is a "silent killer" on houseboats and other recreational vehicles, because it is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas that, in high concentrations, can be fatal in a matter of minutes. Although high concentrations of carbon monoxide are deadly, lower concentrations cannot be ignored because the effects of exposure to carbon monoxide are cumulative and can be just as lethal.

Riverside County has a number of lakes where fishing and recreational boating takes place. Many of these bodies of water are overseen by County staff (i.e. Riverside County Sheriff patrols Lake Elsinore, and Riverside County Parks and Open Space staff operate the facility at Lake Skinner.) The Coast Guard warns all boaters that carbon monoxide poisoning is an extremely dangerous matter, and they advise them to ensure that exhaust systems are properly maintained, that appliances are properly vented, that swimming areas are properly monitored, and that carbon monoxide detectors are installed in accommodation spaces. We need to ensure that we have taken every possible step to advise our boating public about this danger. Therefore, I believe that this Board should take action and direct these applicable departments and agencies to research if we are doing all we can to protect our citizens. I would also urge our County departments to work with State Parks to make sure our actions are in concert with their policies.

Jim Venable, Supervisor
Third District

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COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA