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## **Trading Standards highlight dangers of unreliable alarm**

Kent County Council's Trading Standards is warning consumers about the dangers of using a Plug-in Carbon Monoxide gas alarm which cannot be relied upon to detect the so-called 'silent killer' gas.

The Plug-in Carbon Monoxide alarm is branded 'Proteam' and has been available over the last three months from high street outlets as well as via the internet and through newspaper and other mail order publications. The alarms were sold either singly or with a European plug travel adapter and are designed to sound an alarm when dangerous levels of carbon monoxide gas are detected.

There are various defects with alarms marked with batch numbers PO6/001400 and PO6/001474. They fail to detect carbon monoxide at the concentration required to sound the alarm which could mean that consumers are exposed to potentially dangerous levels of the gas. The instruction leaflet provided is also inadequate and does not make clear how the alarm operates or what actions consumers should take if the alarm does sound.

Carbon Monoxide gas is a colourless, odourless, tasteless, toxic gas which is produced by the incomplete combustion of the fossil fuels - gas, oil, coal and wood used in boilers, gas fires, water heaters, solid fuel appliances and open fires. Dangerous amounts of carbon monoxide can accumulate when, as a result of poor installation, poor maintenance or failure or damage to an appliance in service, the fuel is not burned properly, or when rooms are poorly ventilated and the gas is unable to escape.

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Early symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, such as headaches, nausea, and fatigue, are often mistaken for 'flu because the deadly gas goes undetected in a home. Prolonged exposure can lead to brain damage and even death.

Kent Trading Standards' advice is to stop using products labelled with batch numbers PO6/001400 and PO6/001474 immediately as they cannot be relied upon to operate correctly and warn users of the presence of toxic levels of carbon monoxide gas.

Consumers who purchase goods which are not of satisfactory quality are entitled to a refund from their supplier. For further advice on consumer rights, contact Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06. or log onto [www.consumerdirect.gov.uk](http://www.consumerdirect.gov.uk)

**...ENDS...**



Example of the Proteam alarm