



FACT SHEET

Connecticut Department of Public Health
Environmental Health Section
Environmental & Occupational Health Assessment Program
410 Capitol Avenue, MS # 11EOH, PO Box 340308
Hartford, CT 06134-0308
Telephone: (860) 509-7742 Fax: (860) 509-7785
<http://www.ct.gov/dph>

CARBON MONOXIDE Hazards During Power Outages

Safety Tips

During natural disasters such as hurricanes, blizzards, ice storms and floods when electricity is off for long periods of time, more and more people are turning to other sources of power such as gasoline-powered generators, charcoal grills, gas ovens and fireplaces/wood stoves to heat their homes. **BE AWARE** of the danger of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from improper use of these items.

The number of CO poisonings has been rising each year. From 1999-2006, 334 people died from generator-related CO poisonings, many after major storms knocked out power. This includes the 2000 North Carolina ice storm, the 2004 Florida hurricanes, and the 2005 Katrina and Rita hurricanes on the Southern coast states.

You cannot see or smell CO. CO can KILL very quickly.

Portable Generators

NEVER use a portable generator inside a home, garage, carport, crawlspace, shed or other partially enclosed space, even if the doors and windows are open or fans are running. Deadly levels of CO can build up and remain for hours after the generator has been turned off.

ONLY use portable generators outside, as far away as possible but at least 10 feet (EPA,CDC) from the home. Use heavy-duty extension cords designed for outdoor use. Make sure the cord is free of cuts or tears, the plug has all 3 prongs, and the cord is not pinched or crushed.

KEEP the generator away from doors, windows, vents or air conditioning units.

READ the instructions in the owner's manual and on the label on the generator. **FOLLOW** all instructions.

KEEP the generator dry. Either keep it covered in a specially constructed open canopy-like structure or wait until the rain passes. Consumer-grade generators are not weather proof and pose the risk of electrocution and shock when used in wet conditions. Dry your hands if wet before touching the generator.

CONNECT the generator properly. The generator needs to have a special hookup installed. A licensed electrician should properly wire and connect home-use generators. Do not connect the generator directly into your home's electrical system through a receptacle outlet. Before using a portable generator, you must disconnect your home's electric wiring from the power grid. Otherwise, power from the generator can go out over the utility lines, endangering the lives of workers making repairs. You may need a town permit or official inspection for the generator.

INSTALL a UL certified CO detector in the home outside all sleeping areas. Make sure batteries are changed annually and tested frequently.

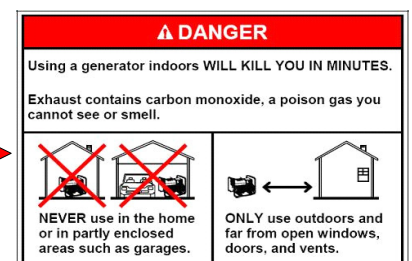
LEAVE the house if you or anyone in the house feels sick, weak, or dizzy. CO monoxide poisoning symptoms mimic cold or flu symptoms.

NEVER store fuel for the generator in the home. Store outside living areas in labeled safety containers and away from any fuel-burning appliance.

ALWAYS turn off the generator and let it cool down before refueling to prevent any spilled gasoline on hot engine parts igniting.

ANCHOR the generator with a chain and padlock if theft is a concern.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the underwriter's Laboratory (UL) have developed a new warning label for portable generators.



Charcoal/Gas Grills, Camp Stoves and Lanterns, Gas Ovens, Fireplaces, Kerosene, Gasoline or Propane-powered Space Heaters

NEVER use a charcoal grill inside the house, fireplace, garage or tent.

DO NOT use the gas oven to heat the house.

NEVER use a camp stove (sterno or propane) or lantern inside.

MAKE SURE the fireplace and chimney are free of debris before using.