



For Immediate Release
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Improper Electrical Generator Use Can be Deadly

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning from Generators Common during Power Outages

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – During power outages, many turn to portable electrical generators for back-up power. A generator can be an effective energy source during a power outage, but improper use can result in carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning or death. CO is produced whenever any fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal is burned without enough air for complete combustions. Always use indoor heat sources according to manufacturer’s instruction.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, CO poisoning from generator use causes an annual average of 81 deaths. The majority of the deaths occurred as a result of using a generator inside a home’s living space, in the basement or in the garage.

NEVER use a portable generator indoors

NEVER use a portable generator in a garage, carport, basement, crawlspace or other enclosed or partially enclosed area, even with ventilation. Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent CO buildup in the home.

- Install home CO alarms that are battery-operated or have a back-up battery. Test batteries frequently and replace when needed.
- Place the generator away from windows, doors, and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to enter the home.
- To avoid electrocution, keep the generator dry. Do not use it in rain or wet conditions. Operate it on a dry surface under an open canopy-like structure. Make sure your hands are dry before touching the generator.

Headaches, fatigue, dizziness, weakness, confusion and nausea are all symptoms of CO poisoning. If CO poisoning is suspected, get fresh air immediately, open doors and windows, turn off combustion appliances and leave the house. Seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Plugging a generator into a wall outlet can create “back -feeding,” which electrifies lines outside of a home and can lead to the electrocution of utility workers. Prevent “back- feeding” by plugging appliances directly into the generator or have a qualified electrician install a power transfer switch.

For more safe generator use and/or carbon monoxide information visit www.ready.alaska.gov
Watch a safe generator use video at <http://www.meacoop/index.php/safety-and-efficiency/safety/generator-safety>

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