



Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Associated with Generators

During power outages, citizens may turn to gasoline or diesel generators for heating or electricity. One of the biggest dangers associated with generator usage is Carbon Monoxide poisoning. The first symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning usually include headache, lightheadedness, dizziness and unexplained sleepiness.

All gasoline and diesel generators create carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that inhibits the body's ability to absorb oxygen, a condition that can cause serious health problems, and even death, within a matter of minutes. More than 1,500 Americans die each year from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning. The department warns that:

- **Generators should only be used outdoors where there is adequate ventilation.** Generators should be placed where the exhaust will not collect in one area or flow into a structure through open doors or windows.
- **Gas and charcoal grills, including camping stoves also generate carbon monoxide.** They should never be used indoors.

Other symptoms of exposure may include an inability to concentrate, memory loss, and loss of coordination. Chest pain, irregular heartbeat and heart attack are also possible. Infants, the elderly, smokers, and individuals with heart disease are at special risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

In addition, candles and other open flame light sources such as lanterns should be used with extreme caution. The improper use of candles can create a substantial fire hazard. Some basic safety tips for candles and open flame light sources include:

- Never leave an unattended candle burning.
- Always supervise children around candles and open flames.
- Make sure candles are kept away from flammable objects such as curtains, paper and cabinetry.
- Candles should be only use on a sturdy, flat surface to minimize the risk of tipping.
- If large quantities of candles are used in an enclosed area, the risk of carbon monoxide also becomes a concern.

Christian County Emergency Management