

Beware of the Dangers from Alternative Heating Sources during Power Outages

Alternative power sources such as generators and kerosene heaters are commonly used during electrical power outages. Improper usage of these devices can cause carbon monoxide to build up in homes or garages, resulting in sudden illness and death.

Install battery-operated carbon monoxide detectors inside your home and replace batteries as required. Seek medical attention if you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning and are experiencing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. Early symptoms include headache, fatigue, dizziness, drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain and confusion. Individuals who are sleeping or who have been drinking alcohol may die from carbon monoxide poisoning before ever experiencing symptoms.

Safety Steps to Take When Using Portable Generators

- Properly follow manufacturer's instructions carefully for your specific generator model.
- Never operate a generator inside a home, garage or partially enclosed space, even if doors and windows are open.
- Operate a generator at least 25 feet from your home, far away from windows, doors and vents.
- Secure the generator with a steel link chain and lock to prevent theft.
- Make sure your generator is properly grounded. Use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to help prevent electrocution and electrical shock injuries. Do not overload the generator.
- Use a heavy-duty outdoor-rated extension cord that is free of cuts or tears and has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin.
- Install battery-operated carbon monoxide detectors in your home according to the manufacturer's instructions and replace the batteries on a regular basis. If the detector sounds, leave your home immediately and dial 911.

Tips on Proper Kerosene Heater Use

- Properly follow manufacturer's instructions carefully for your specific heater model.
- Be sure that wick is set at proper level as instructed by manufacturer and is clean.
- Operate a kerosene heater in a well-vented area. Leave a door open to rest of the house or keep an outside window open to ensure adequate flow of fresh air.
- Install battery-operated carbon monoxide detectors in your home according to the manufacturer's instructions and replace the batteries on a regular basis. If the detector sounds, leave your home immediately and dial 911.
- Use only 1-K grade kerosene fuel. Colored or cloudy kerosene will give out an odor and smoke when burned and will also gum up the wick.
- Store kerosene in container intended for kerosene only. Don't store in a gasoline can or container that contained gasoline. This will avoid using contaminated fuel or the wrong fuel by mistake. Kerosene containers are usually blue and gasoline containers are red.
- Never refuel heaters inside the home. Fill the tank outdoors, away from combustible materials and after the heater is turned off and allowed to cool. Do not fill the fuel tank above the "full" mark. This area allows the fuel to expand without causing leakage when the heater is operated.
- Never attempt to move a lighted kerosene heater. Even a carrying handle could cause burns.
- To avoid risk of fire, place the kerosene heater several feet away from all furniture, curtains, paper, clothes, bedding and other combustible materials.
- Infants, small children and pets should be kept away from heaters to avoid serious burns.

NEVER USE A CHARCOAL/PROPANE GRILL, CAMP STOVE, PORTABLE OUTDOOR PROPANE HEATER OR LEAVE YOUR OVEN DOOR OPEN INSIDE YOUR HOUSE FOR HEAT! These devices put out carbon monoxide poisoning, which can be deadly.