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STEPHEN D. COAN  
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For Immediate Release: October 28, 2012

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### **Fire Marshal Issues Carbon Monoxide Warning**

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan issued a carbon monoxide warning for people who experience a power outage from this storm. "This slow-moving storm most likely will cause extensive power outages," said Coan. "It is important to take steps to stay safe and prevent fires and carbon monoxide poisoning," he added.

#### **Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**

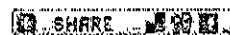
"Carbon monoxide poisoning is a great risk at times like these. During the extended power outages after last year's Halloween storm, the number of carbon monoxide incidents that fire departments responded to spiked," said Coan. "Don't use your oven for heat and don't bring a charcoal or gas grill inside to cook; doing so can cause carbon monoxide poisoning," he said. Generators are a common source of carbon monoxide poisoning during extended power outages. Coan warned, "Use generators outdoors only. Using generators or gas or charcoal grills inside the garage – even with the door open – poses a serious risk of CO poisoning."

#### **Make Sure Smoke Alarms and CO Alarms are Working**

One of the simplest safety steps you can take is to make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are working. "Make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms have fresh batteries,"

For more information on storm safety go to [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs) and click on "Hurricane Safety". The U.S. Fire Administration has tips on using generators safely at: [www.usfa.fema.gov/citizens/co/generator.shtm](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/citizens/co/generator.shtm).

*Administrative Services • Division of Fire Safety*  
*Hazardous Materials Response • Massachusetts Firefighting Academy*



## CPSC and USFA News



U.S. Consumer Product  
Safety Commission  
[www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

United States  
Fire Administration  
[www.usfa.dhs.gov](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov)

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CPSC Hotline: (800) 638-2772  
CPSC Media Contact: (301) 504-7908

### **Hurricane Isaac Warning: Keep Generators Outside and Far Away from Homes** ***CPSC and USFA Warn Carbon Monoxide from Generators Can Kill***

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) are warning consumers to be vigilant when using portable generators to deal with power outages after Hurricane Isaac.

The exhaust from gasoline-powered generators contains high levels of poisonous carbon monoxide (CO) that can quickly incapacitate and kill within minutes. Generators should only be used outside, far away from homes. Never run a generator inside a house, basement, garage, shed or near windows or vents to your house or a neighbor's house.

CPSC is aware of at least 755 CO deaths involving generators between 1999 and 2011. Many generator CO deaths occur in the aftermath of natural disasters such as hurricanes.

"Our message is that these deaths are preventable," said CPSC Chairman Inez Tenenbaum. "Where you run a generator can make the difference between life and death. The only safe place to operate a generator is outside in open air, placed far from your home, not in a garage or any enclosed space."

"Portable generators are useful when electric power is needed, but they can be very hazardous when installed or used improperly," said U.S. Fire Administrator Ernie Mitchell. "The hazards may include damaged electrical systems, carbon monoxide poisoning, electrocution, and fire. Carefully follow manufacturer recommendations for installation and use. Also, consult electrical experts to ensure installation meets local building codes."

In addition to using a generator outside and far away from the home, CPSC and USFA offer these generator safety tips:

- Read both the label on the generator and in the owner's manual and follow the instructions.
- Use heavy-duty extension cords that are specifically designed for outdoor use with the generator. Extension cords should be free of damage.

## Hurricane Isaac Warning: Keep Generators Outside and Far Away from Homes

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- Extension cords that are long enough to allow the generator to be placed outdoors and far away from windows, doors and vents to the home or to other structures that could be occupied.
- If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak while using a generator, get to fresh air RIGHT AWAY. DO NOT DELAY. CO from generators can kill you in minutes.
- Install battery-operated CO alarms or plug-in CO alarms with battery back-up on every level of the home and outside sleeping areas and according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Generators pose a risk of shock and electrocution, especially if they are operated in wet conditions. Operate the generator under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot reach it or puddle or drain under it.
- NEVER try to power the house wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet, a practice known as "backfeeding." This is extremely dangerous and presents an electrocution risk to utility workers and neighbors served by the same utility transformer.

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The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of injury or death associated with the use of the thousands of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. Deaths, injuries, and property damage from consumer product incidents cost the nation more than \$900 billion annually. CPSC is committed to protecting consumers and families from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical, or mechanical hazard. CPSC's work to ensure the safety of consumer products - such as toys, cribs, power tools, cigarette lighters and household chemicals - contributed to a decline in the rate of deaths and injuries associated with consumer products over the past 30 years.

Under federal law, it is illegal to attempt to sell or resell this or any other recalled product.

To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury, go online to: [SaferProducts.gov](http://SaferProducts.gov), call CPSC's Hotline at (800) 638-2772 or teletypewriter at (301) 595-7054 for the hearing and speech impaired. Consumers can obtain this news release and product safety information at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov). To join a free e-mail subscription list, please go to [www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.aspx](http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.aspx).



# Hurricane Safety

**Prevent fires, electrical shock and carbon monoxide poisoning when coping with a disaster.**

- **Use caution with cooking appliances.**

*Do not use a charcoal or propane grill, hibachi or camping stove inside the home. This could pose a carbon monoxide or an explosion hazard.*

- **Use generators outdoors only.**

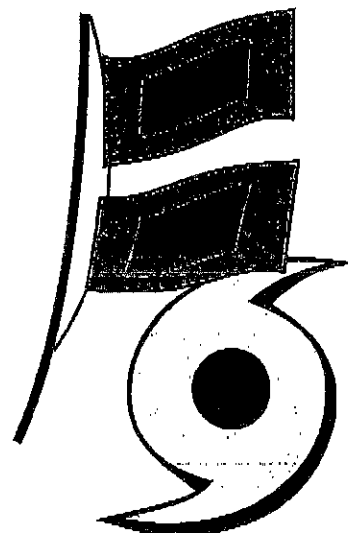
*Generators and other fuel powered machines should be used outside the home & not near any openings such as windows or doors. Carbon monoxide fumes are odorless and can quickly overwhelm you indoors.*

- **Remember Water and Electricity Do Not Mix!**

*Watch for downed wires. All downed wires should be considered "live" & can severely injure you. Be sure to explain this to children.*

*Do not venture into a flooded basement. If the outlets or the fuse box in the basement are under water, it could electrically charge the water and electrocute you. Flooded water may contain untreated sewage and cause serious health problems.*

*If you fill the bathtub with water "just in case", be sure to keep all electrical appliances at a safe distance.*



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## FireFACTORS

Office of the State Fire Marshal • Department of Fire Services  
P.O. Box 1025 State Road Stow, MA 01775 (978) 567-3300 [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs)

- **Give your smoke & Carbon monoxide (CO) alarms fresh batteries.**

*Working smoke & CO alarms can double your family's chances of surviving a disaster & avoiding a tragedy. Make sure your smoke & CO alarms have fresh batteries.*

- **Use flashlights and battery-operated candles if the power goes out.**

*Use flashlights or battery-operated candles if the power goes out. Candle fires have turned deadly during power outages when smoke alarms also may not work. Make sure to have plenty of extra batteries in case of prolonged power outages.*

- **Gas Safety**

*Smell and listen for leaky gas connections. If you believe there is a gas leak (it smells like rotten eggs), leave the house immediately, leaving the door open. Call the fire department from your cell phone or a neighbor's house.*

*Never strike a match. Any size flame or spark can cause an explosion.*

- **Calling for Help**

*Charge up your cell phone battery in advance. Fire alarm boxes may not work if the power is out. Do not be afraid to call for help in an emergency or if you think you may be in trouble.*

*Avoid non-emergency calls to police and fire departments.*

- **Make and practice a home escape plan, with two ways out & an outside meeting place.**

*Teach your home's escape plan & meeting place to your family & guests. If you are visiting friends or relatives, ask about the escape plan & meeting place for their house.*

- **Flooding Safety.**

*If you live near the coast or in an area prone to flooding, be prepared to move to a safer location if necessary. Be alert to your local fire, police or emergency management departments for evacuation warnings. A battery powered radio & spare batteries are important to get information about the changing events during & after a hurricane.*

- **Prepare an Emergency Kit**

*Make an emergency kit including a 3-day supply of water & non-perishable food, a first aid kit, a battery powered or hand cranked radio, flashlight & extra*