



City of Wharton

Office of Emergency Management

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POST-STORM PREPAREDNESS: CARBON MONOXIDE SAFETY AND GENERATORS

Many people die immediately after a hurricane, severe storm or other disaster when generators or gasoline-powered tools expose them to deadly carbon monoxide (CO). Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, tasteless and poisonous gas.

To avoid carbon monoxide exposure, be extremely careful using generators, lanterns, gas powered appliances or when cooking on charcoal grills or gas grills. Equipment or appliances that produce carbon monoxide should never be used indoors. Take the following precautions:

- **NEVER** use a generator or grill indoors, including inside homes, garages, basements, crawl spaces, tents or other enclosed or partially enclosed areas.
- Opening doors and windows or using fans will **NOT** prevent CO build-up. The gas cannot be seen or smelled and poisoning can occur in a matter of minutes.
- Follow the instructions that come with the generator. **ALWAYS** locate the unit outdoors on a dry surface, away from doors, windows, vents and air conditioning equipment that could allow CO to seep into the house.
- Gas-powered generators can be used safely if they are placed in a well-ventilated outdoor area at least 10 feet away from a home or structure.
- If electric power is out, do not use gas ranges or ovens to heat your home.
- Remember that you cannot see or smell CO and portable generators can produce high levels of CO very quickly. If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak while using a generator, get to fresh air immediately. **DO NOT DELAY.**
- If someone else collapses or is not breathing, dial 9-1-1.
- When you are making your hurricane or severe weather preparedness plans, remember to install battery-operated CO alarms or plug-in CO alarms with battery back-up in your home, always following the manufacturer's installation instructions. Test your CO alarms frequently and replace dead batteries.

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