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# Carbon Monoxide Dangers

## Safety Precautions Can Help Prevent Poisoning



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**Viera, FL** — As Floridians begin the task of preparing for a storm, the Florida Department of Health in Brevard County (DOH-Brevard) is urging the public to avoid carbon monoxide (CO) exposure by taking precautions with gas-powered appliances, portable generators and charcoal or gas grills.

CO is an invisible, odorless, and tasteless gas that is highly poisonous. CO may cause fatigue, weakness, chest pains for those with heart disease, shortness of breath upon exertion, abdominal pain, vomiting, headaches, confusion, lack of coordination, impaired vision, flu-like symptoms that clear up after leaving the home, loss of consciousness and in severe cases death.

DOH-Brevard recommends the following precautions to help prevent carbon monoxide poisoning:

- **Do Not** burn charcoal in a fireplace or use charcoal or gas grills inside a house, garage, vehicle or tent.
- **Never** use a generator indoors, including in homes, garages, basements, crawl spaces, and other enclosed or partially enclosed areas, *even with ventilation*.
  - Opening doors and windows, or using fans, will not prevent CO build-up in the home.
- **Always** keep running portable generators or gasoline engines (such as pressure washers and vehicles) outside, more than 20 feet away from open windows, doors, window air conditioners or exhaust vents that could allow CO to come indoors. Follow the instructions that come with the equipment.
- **Install**, per the manufacturer's installation instructions, battery-operated CO alarms or plug-in CO alarms with battery back-up in your home. The CO alarms should be certified to the requirements of the latest safety standards for CO alarms (UL 2034, IAS 6-96, ASTM D6332, or CSA 6.19.01).
- **Test** your CO alarms per the manufacturer's recommendations and replace dead batteries.
- **Remember** you cannot see, or smell CO. Portable generators can produce high levels of CO very quickly.

If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak while using a generator or other gas-powered equipment, get to fresh air **right away. Do not delay.**

If a person has collapsed or is not breathing, call 911 for emergency medical assistance immediately from a safe location such as outside or from a neighbor's home. Call the Florida Poison Information Center at 1-800-222-1222 for additional information and advice about CO poisoning.

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