

Avoid Carbon Monoxide Poisoning!

A number of people affected by hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Ike became sick and died from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. CO, an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death, is found in combustion fumes produced by the small gasoline engines that power portable generators and pressure washers. Carbon monoxide from these sources can build up in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces, poisoning the people and animals that breathe it.

Portable generator use is widespread after natural disasters like hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Ike, and the SFMO expects that pressure washers and portable generators will be commonly used in the weeks following a hurricane.

Never use generators, grills, camp stoves, or other gasoline, propane, natural gas, or charcoal-burning devices inside your home, basement, garage, or camper-or even outside near an open window.

In addition to the eight known CO poisoning deaths, 2008's Hurricane Ike exposed new CO poisoning dangers. Hours after Hurricane Ike roared ashore in Texas, more than two million homes were without power, which left some people scrambling to preserve food and others looking for ways to entertain children, a move that proved to be, in some instances, poisonous.

Of the 37 individuals treated for carbon monoxide poisoning after the storm, 20 were under the age of 20. In nine of those cases, researchers were able to speak with families to determine why a gasoline-powered electrical generator was being used. In 75 percent of those cases, the generator was used to run video games.

You can find information concerning carbon monoxide safety at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/cofacts.html>

Other Useful Tips

<https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>

Emergency Shelter Safety Standards

The **State Fire Marshal's Office** has the following information regarding fire safety standards for emergency shelters as Texas prepares for the arrival of a hurricane.

Anyone proposing establishing an emergency shelter for hurricane evacuees should contact his or her local county Emergency Management Coordinator or County Fire Marshal prior to commencing shelter operations. These coordinators will have access to shelter planning information and will facilitate coordination of shelters with the **Texas Division of Emergency Management**.

If the Emergency Management Coordinator is not listed in the local telephone book, the County Judge or Sheriff should be contacted for the telephone number.



Hurricane Season

Fire Safety Tips

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Fire Safety for Evacuees

During evacuations, the immediate need for transportation and shelter often take priority over fire safety. Evacuees focused upon escape should also remain mindful of fire safety by making a special effort to protect against accidental fire.

Fire Safety During Transit

During the 2005 Hurricane Rita evacuations, Texans experienced transportation/vehicle-related fires. Vehicles often have highly flammable padding materials, and emergency supplies, like bedding, are combustible. To reduce the risk of fire, you should:

- Obey all restrictions regarding smoking and the use of open flame. Always extinguish smoking materials in a safe method and location.
- Ensure that vehicles used to transport persons with medical conditions have able-bodied attendants and operators.
- Avoid spills and ignition sources when transferring gasoline from one container to another.

Fire Safety at Evacuation Destinations

When evacuees arrive at their destinations, they may overlook normal fire safety provisions that exist in their normal environment but may not be available in their new displaced or unfamiliar surroundings. This is especially true in rooms or buildings not normally used for shelter or sleeping. When entering unfamiliar surroundings:

- Locate the closest fire extinguisher.
- Avoid over crowding in any building or location.
- Locate exits (at least two) and ensure they are unlocked and not blocked.
- Keep combustible materials (especially paper and cardboard boxes) away from open flames, space heaters and other electrical devices.
- Keep electrical circuits from overloading by limiting the number of electrical devices plugged into outlets.
- When staying in hotels and motels make sure the smoke alarm is working.



For more information:
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