



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES
Bureau for Public Health
Commissioner's Office

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IMPORTANT SEPTEMBER 2018 HURRICANE FLORENCE STORM INFORMATION

TO: Local Health Departments

FROM: Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, MBA, FACP RG
Commissioner and State Health Officer

DATE: September 14, 2018

RE: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health is informing all local health departments (LHDs) of the impending weather and potential for significant rainfall, flooding and power outages.

Carbon Monoxide is Serious Public Health Concern During Power Outages

With the imminent storm tracking toward West Virginia and subsequent power outages, residents may begin using gasoline generators, gas or charcoal grills and camp stoves. When used improperly, such appliances may be harmful or even deadly due to carbon monoxide (CO). These should never be used indoors, including in basements, garages, or other enclosed spaces due to the risk of CO poisoning.

CO is an odorless, colorless, poisonous gas that can cause sudden illness and death if present in sufficient concentration in the ambient air. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and altered mental status. If you suspect that you or a family member has CO poisoning, get fresh air immediately and call 911.

For additional information on CO poisoning, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/co_guidance.asp

Questions about CO poisoning may be directed to the LHD or the Bureau for Public Health.