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Unsafe use of generators and grills can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning

Many residents turn to gasoline generators, gas or charcoal grills and camp stoves during extensive power outages. The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources is reminding residents that these appliances may be harmful or even deadly when used improperly because of carbon monoxide (CO).

DHHR Office of Environmental Health Services Director Barb Taylor said "Never use generators and charcoal or gas grills inside your home, in basements, in garages, or other enclosed spaces due to the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. CDC says these appliances should not be operated near an open window or window air conditioner which may allow fumes to enter the home."

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. Get fresh air immediately and call 911 if you suspect that you or a family member has carbon monoxide poisoning.

More information about CO is available online at
http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/co_guidance.asp.