

FIRE SAFETY IN THE NEWS

Portable Generator Safety

When a member of your community dies from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning as the result of improper generator use, it is important to let others know how they can prevent a similar tragedy. As you continue to report on the incident, the U.S. Fire Administration encourages you to remind your audience that many CO deaths are preventable.

More than 4,000 Americans die each year in fires and approximately 20,000 are injured. Many of them might be alive today if only they had the information they needed to avoid a disaster.

The following life-saving tips could make a big difference to your audience. By incorporating them in your story now, while the moment is still fresh, you could help save a life.

Portable Generator Safety Life-Saving Tips

- ☑ Always use generators outdoors, away from doors, windows, and vents. NEVER use generators inside homes, garages, basements, crawl spaces, or other enclosed or partially enclosed areas, even with ventilation.
- ☑ Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.
- ☑ Install battery-operated or plug-in (with battery backup) carbon monoxide alarms in your home, following the manufacturer's instructions.
- ☑ Test CO detectors often and replace batteries when needed.
- ☑ Keep the generator dry. Use on a dry surface under an open, canopy-like structure.
- ☑ Dry your hands before touching the generator.
- ☑ Plug appliances directly into the generator or use a heavy-duty outdoor-rated extension cord. Make sure the entire extension cord is free of cuts or tears and the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin.
- ☑ NEVER plug the generator into a wall outlet (known as back-feeding). This practice can cause an electrocution risk to utility workers and others served by the same utility transformer.
- ☑ If you must connect a generator to house wiring, have a qualified electrician install appropriate equipment. Your utility company may be able to install an appropriate transfer switch as well.
- ☑ Before refueling the generator, turn it off and let it cool. Fuel spilled on hot engine parts could ignite.
- ☑ Always store fuel outside of living areas in properly labeled, non-glass containers.
- ☑ Store fuel away from any fuel-burning appliance.

Did you know?

- ▶ From 1990 to 2003, 228 carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning deaths were associated with portable generators, as reported to the CPSC.
- ▶ From 2001 to 2003, the number of reported CO poisoning deaths associated with portable generators doubled.
- ▶ The most common improper placement of portable generators that result in injury or death are in crawl spaces, basements, attached garages, within or in close proximity to the home.

Following these simple fire safety tips can increase survival rates dramatically. Please share them with your audience because knowledge is the best fire protection.

For more information on the U.S. Fire Administration Public Education Campaigns or to speak with a USFA spokesperson please call 202-842-3600. Also visit www.usfa.fema.gov or www.firesafety.gov for additional information on fire safety.



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