



# NEWS from STATE FIRE



NEW YORK STATE  
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Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor

Bryant Stevens, Acting State Fire Administrator

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FOR RELEASE:  
IMMEDIATE, Tuesday  
November 1, 2011

## After the Storm: Power Outages May Lead to Hidden Dangers

Power outages continue to affect several parts of the State in the aftermath of the season's first nor'easter. As many New Yorkers rely on portable generators for electricity, and gas/charcoal grills for heat and food preparation, the Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) reminds people that it is imperative that they act now to protect themselves and their families from the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO).

"Carbon monoxide is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in America, according to the Centers for Disease Control" said Acting State Fire Administrator Bryant D. Stevens. "You can't smell it, see it or taste it. Carbon monoxide kills more than 400 people every year and sends more than 20,000 people to the emergency room. The only safe way to detect it is with a carbon monoxide alarm."

When portable generators, gas/charcoal grills and candles are used improperly, they can significantly increase the risk of a house fire or carbon monoxide poisoning. Without a carbon monoxide alarm, you may never even know carbon monoxide is in the air, slowly doing its lethal work with every breath you take.

Here are some important safety tips from OFPC:

- Install battery-operated CO alarms on every floor and in sleeping areas to protect your family during power outages.
- For homes with carbon monoxide alarms installed five or more years ago, it is time to replace those alarms to help ensure protection from the silent killer.
- Only operate generators outdoors in well-ventilated, dry areas, away from air intakes to the home. Do not run portable generators on a porch, in an attached garage, basement or near an open window where wind could blow carbon monoxide fumes into the home.

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- Follow the manufacturers' instructions when using generators. Use the appropriate sized and type power cords. Overloaded or covered cords could overheat and cause fires.
- Don't use a charcoal or gas grill inside your home or outside near a window where CO fumes could seep into your home.
- Never leave a car running in an attached garage, even with the door open.
- Extinguish all candles before going to sleep and when leaving the house or a room where a candle is burning for a long period of time.

Carbon monoxide alarms have become an essential element of an overall home safety program according to Paul D. Martin, Chief of Inspections and Investigations for OFPC.

In February 2010, a new state law known as "Amanda's Law" became effective. Named in honor of Buffalo resident Amanda Hansen, a teenage girl who lost her life to carbon monoxide poisoning from a defective boiler when sleeping over at a friend's house, the law now requires CO alarms to be installed in all new and existing one and two-family dwellings, multifamily dwellings, and rentals having a fuel-burning appliance, system or attached garage.

For more information on carbon monoxide safety and Amanda's Law, visit <http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/ofpc>.

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