

## When the Power Goes Out: Fire and Carbon Monoxide Awareness

New Englanders are accustomed to winter storms and power outages. And many of us depend on cooking and heating our homes in ways that don't rely on electricity: portable generators, wood, gas, propane, charcoal, and pellet-fueled stoves, grills, fireplaces, and space heaters. It's important to remember that all of these sources pose fire and carbon monoxide hazards.



### Maintenance

- Routine maintenance will reduce the risk of fire hazard from dirt, debris, and worn-out components
- Have the wood-burning chimney cleaned and inspected, gas fireplaces and other appliances need the same attention
- Always follow manufactures recommendations

### Ventilation

- All burning fuels cause carbon monoxide (CO)
- During storms, when damage and blockages to equipment and ventilation systems can occur, remember to check equipment routinely
- CO is present in outdoor and indoor air
- It is produced by burning fuels such as wood, oil, natural gas, propane, kerosene, coal and gasoline



### You May Not Realize

- High snow and drifts can block ventilation and cause CO buildup in the home -check outside vents
- A CO alarm is not a substitute for regular maintenance of fuel-burning appliances or equipment
- A portable generator releases levels of CO that are much higher than an idling car
- Always place generators outside and away from windows and doors of any nearby building
- One study demonstrated that 15 feet was not far enough to prevent a build-up of CO inside the home
- Cooking with CO-generating fuel must be done outside; used indoors or in a semi-enclosed space such as a porch, poses a CO risk
- Never operate a gas or briquette grill indoors or use a non-electric kitchen range for warmth

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