



Cumberland Fire Department has a very important message for our citizens during the winter season:

Portable generators are extremely dangerous and should be used with caution.

Generators produce carbon monoxide, a gas which is odorless, tasteless, and invisible to the eye. Some of the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include: dizziness, confusion, nausea, fatigue, headache and even death. Sometimes people can overlook these symptoms thinking they have the flu, not realizing they are being poisoned by the deadly gas.

Cumberland Fire Department encourages you to follow these valuable life saving tips:

- First and foremost: read all instructions included with your generator before an emergency happens.
- Distance your gas powered generator **at least 5 feet away** from your house, as a minimum. Winds often change and therefore, the further away the better. In addition, make sure the exhaust fumes are projected away from your home.
- Exhaust fumes can spread and enter through any opening. Do not place generators under the eaves, near windows, doors, or in the garage.
- Many fires start while filling the tank. Just a small spill on the hot exhaust pipe could cause a fire. Do not fill the generator with gas until the unit has cooled.
- Unapproved plastics could leak, and glass containers could ignite if dropped and start a fire. Gasoline should be stored in approved containers marked with letters UL (approved by **Underwriters Laboratory**).
- Spilled gasoline or even the escaped vapors could cause a flashback to the pilot light of any appliance. Store gasoline away from any appliances that have a pilot light. This is a common issue in garage areas where gas water heaters are often located.
- Have a licensed electrician install a transfer switch if you don't want to run extension cords through your house.
- If using extension cords, make sure they are grounded and are heavy enough to take any load you put on them.
- Your home's electrical system needs to be turned off at the main switch. Many fires occurred last year when power was returned and residents had left home leaving on ovens, burners, curling irons, blow dryers and other appliances.
- It is wise to invest in a Carbon Monoxide Detector *but not as a replacement* for proper use and maintenance of your fuel-burning appliances.

Remember, generators should be used with extreme caution.

If you have any questions or have concerns about generator use please your local fire station at 207.829.5421 and ask for other safety tips

Adapted from <http://www.mydelraybeach.com/Delray/Departments/Fire-Rescue/Safety/Portable+Generator+Safety.htm> Delray