

2011 Winter Storm Alfred

Eastern Highlands Health District

- Safety precautions regarding Food, Heat, and Water -

Food: Prevent illness caused by food borne bacteria

The best rule of thumb regarding perishable food is when in doubt, throw it out! It is **not safe to trust your senses** (smell or sight) when determining if a food is safe to eat. The document below (from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension) provides a reliable resource for guidance of safety of refrigerated foods after a power outage. Simply click on the image to see the full document.

● Safety of Refrigerated Foods After a Power Outage

The information on the next five pages is derived from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, the Land Grant University of the state of Maine and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. This is information to share with consumers. This can also serve as useful reference information for regulators.

Note that temperature recommendations are for consumers (40°F & 140°F). If applied to food establishments, use appropriate commercial, regulatory temperature standards.

Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature.

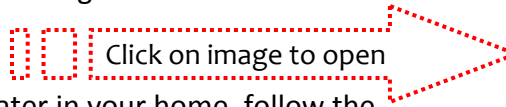
All chopped meats, poultry and seafood sandwich fillings should not be left without refrigeration for more than two hours. If any perishable or potentially hazardous foods have exceeded 40 degrees F for more than two hours, throw it away.

Do not trust your eyes and sense of smell. Food may be unsafe, even if it doesn't smell bad or even if it looks safe.

● You can extend your food supply by cooking all unspoiled meat immediately. Cooked meat needs to be kept above 140 degrees F if it cannot be cooled below 40 degrees F within four hours. A food thermometer will help you check food temperatures.

Heat: Avoid Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

While there are ways to stay warm when the power is out, several methods are dangerous due to **carbon monoxide poisoning!** Never use a charcoal grill indoors for heating or cooking, and don't use gas stoves as a source of heat. Either one can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning. A fireplace is safe to use for heat and cooking if it is properly vented to the outside. In addition, check to see if water or a power outage has affected your furnace and assure that it is venting properly and the pilot light is on. **Never** place gasoline generators indoors.



When using a kerosene heater in your home, follow the manufacture's instructions carefully. General precautions include: Never refill the fuel in a heater inside your home, never use gasoline in a kerosene heater, and keep the heater at least 3 feet away from furniture, drapes, and clothing. Additional information from the Consumer Product Safety Commission about using a kerosene heater safely can be found by clicking on the images below.

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 Environmental Health Section
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FACT SHEET

CARBON MONOXIDE Hazards During Power Outages

Safety Tips

During natural disasters such as hurricanes, blizzards, ice storms and floods when electricity is off for long periods of time, more and more people are turning to other sources of power such as gasoline-powered generators, charcoal grills, gas ovens and fireplaces/wood stoves to heat their homes. **BE AWARE** of the danger of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from improper use of these items.

The number of CO poisonings has been rising each year. From 1999-2006, 334 people died from generator-related CO poisonings, many after major storms knocked out power. This includes the 2000 North Carolina ice storm, the 2004 Florida hurricanes, and the 2005 Katrina and Rita hurricanes on the Southern coast states.

You cannot see or smell CO. CO can KILL very quickly.

Portable Generators

NEVER use a portable generator inside a home, garage, carport, crawlspace, shed or other partially enclosed space, **even if the doors and windows are open or fans are running**. Deadly levels of CO can build up and remain for hours after the generator has been turned off.

ONLY use portable generators outside, as far away as possible but at least 10 feet (EPA/CDC) from the home. Use heavy-duty extension cords designed for outdoor use. Make sure the cord is free of cuts or tears, the plug has all 3 prongs, and the cord is not pinched or crushed.

KEEP the generator away from doors, windows, vents or air conditioning units.

READ the instructions in the owner's manual and on the label on the generator. **FOLLOW** all instructions.

KEEP the generator dry. Either keep it covered in a specially constructed open canopy-like structure or wait until the rain passes. Consumer-grade generators are not weather proof and pose the risk of electrocution and shock when used in wet conditions. Dry your hands if wet before touching the generator.

CONNECT the generator properly. The generator needs to have a special hookup installed. A licensed electrician should properly wire and connect home-use generators. **Do not** connect the generator directly into your home's electrical system through a receptacle outlet. Before using a portable generator, you must disconnect your home's electric wiring from the power grid. Otherwise, power from the generator can go out over the utility lines, endangering the lives of workers making repairs. You may need a town permit or official inspection for the generator.

INSTALL a UL certified CO detector in the home outside all sleeping areas. Make sure batteries are changed annually and tested frequently.

LEAVE the house if you or anyone in the house feels sick, weak, or dizzy. CO monoxide poisoning symptoms mimic cold or flu symptoms.

NEVER store fuel for the generator in the home. Store outside living areas in labeled safety containers and away from any fuel-burning appliance.

ALWAYS turn off the generator and let it cool down before refueling to prevent any spilled gasoline on hot engine parts igniting.

ANCHOR the generator with a chain and padlock if theft is a concern.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Underwriters' Laboratory (UL) have developed a new warning label for portable generators.

Charcoal/Gas Grills, Camp Stoves and Lanterns, Gas Ovens, Fireplaces, Kerosene, Gasoline or Propane-powered Space Heaters

NEVER use a charcoal grill inside the house, fireplace, garage or tent.
DO NOT use the gas oven to heat the house.
NEVER use a gas stove, lantern or propane or butane inside.
MAKE SURE the fireplace and chimney are free of debris before using.

CPSC Safety Alert

CPSC Stresses Kerosene Heater Safety

WARNING

Improper Use Can Cause Uncontrolled Fire To Reduce Fire Risk:

Never Use Gasoline or Any Fuel Other Than 1-K Kerosene. Use Blue "Kerosene" Containers; Never Use Red for Kerosene. Always Store Kerosene Away From Other Fuel Containers. Never Fuel Heater While It is Operating or Hot. Use Heater at Least Three Feet From Furniture or Clothing. If Fire Occurs: "Get Quickly and Warn Others, "Call Fire Department," "Do Not Move Heater, Try to Smother Fire, or Put Water on the Fire" "Hot Surfaces "Keep Children Away "Do Not Operate Without Installing the Protective Grille

CAUTION

Improper Use Can Cause Pollution and Health Problems To Reduce Risk:

Use Only 1-K Kerosene. Operate Only at Recommended Flame Height. After Lighting, Always Properly Start Burner. Do Not Operate Heater at Lower Than Minimum Wick-Stop Setting. Keep the Wick and Heater Clean - See Instruction Manual for Cleaning and Proper Operation. Always Operate Heater With Doors of Hopper Open. Follow All Applicable Code Requirements When Using Heater. Keep Instruction Manual.

If you are using a kerosene heater, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission advises you to follow these suggestions to reduce the risk of fire and potential health effects from indoor air pollution.

- Use only water-clear 1-K grade kerosene. Never use gasoline. Gasoline is not the same as kerosene. Even small amounts of gasoline or other volatile fuels or solvents mixed with kerosene can substantially increase the risk of a fire or an explosion.
- Always store kerosene in a separate container intended for kerosene, not in a gasoline can or a can that previously has contained gasoline. This helps you avoid using contaminated fuel or the wrong fuel by mistake. Kerosene containers usually are blue; gasoline containers usually are red.
- When purchasing kerosene at the pump, make sure to use the kerosene pump, not the gasoline pump. Some service stations have separate islands for kerosene. Some oil companies also have established quality control programs to reduce the chances of gasoline contamination of kerosene.
- 1-K grade kerosene should be purchased only from a dealer who can certify that you are purchasing 1-K grade kerosene. State-operated and private sector certification



CPSC Safety Alert

programs that ensure the quality of kerosene are established in some states. Grades other than 1-K can lead to a release of more pollutants in your home, posing a possible health risk. Different grades of kerosene can look the same, so it is important that the dealer certify that the product sold is 1-K grade kerosene.

- Never refuel the heater inside the home. Fill the tank outdoors, away from combustible materials, and only after the heater has been turned off and allowed to cool down. Do not refuel the heater when it is hot or in use. Do not fill the fuel tank above the "full" mark. The space above the "full" mark is to allow room for the fuel to expand without causing leakage when the heater is operating.
- In case of flare-up, or if uncontrolled flaming occurs, do not attempt to move or carry the heater. This can make the fire worse. If the heater is equipped with a manual shut-off switch, activate the switch to turn off the heater. If this does not put out the fire, leave the house immediately, and call the fire department.
- Install smoke alarms in your home. As an added reminder and precaution, install smoke alarms on every level of the home, outside sleeping areas, and inside bedrooms. Replace batteries annually and test monthly.
- Reduce your exposure to indoor air pollutants by properly operating and maintaining your kerosene heater. Although kerosene heaters are very efficient while burning fuel to produce heat, low levels of certain pollutants, such as carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide, are produced. Exposure to low levels of these pollutants may be harmful, especially to individuals with chronic respiratory or circulatory health problems. To ensure that you and family members are not exposed to significant levels of these pollutants, you should follow carefully the following rules of safe operation:
 - Operate your heater in a room with a door open to the rest of the house.
 - Open an outside window approximately one inch to permit fresh air to effectively dilute the pollutants:
 - if you must operate your heater in a room with the door closed to the rest of the house, or
 - if your home is relatively new and tight, or older but has been winterized to reduce air infiltration from the outside.
 - Always use your heater according to the manufacturer's instructions, making sure that the wick is set at the proper level, as instructed by the manufacturer.
 - Make sure the wick in your heater is clean and in good operating condition by following the cleaning and maintenance procedures recommended by the manufacturer.

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Water: Avoid illness caused by contaminated water

After a storm, water from public water supplies and private wells may not be safe to drink. Water that is discolored, cloudy, has an odor, or has small particles or floating pieces should NOT be used. Listen to the news or your water company to know if your water's safe. For more information on public drinking water systems go to www.ct.gov/dph/publicdrinkingwater.

To disinfect water, use ONE of the following methods:

- Boil at a rolling boil for one minute. Make sure water is clear of any particles or floating pieces before boiling; OR,
- Add 8 drops of liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of clear water or 16 drops per gallon for cloudy water. Do NOT use bleach that has perfumes or ingredients other than sodium hypochlorite as it may be toxic; OR,
- Add water purification tablets according to directions on the package.

All of the EHHD member towns have resources to obtain fresh drinking water. Please check with your town hall or go to one of the following locations to fill your clean container with potable (drinking) water:

Town	Potable (Drinking) Water Filling Stations
Andover	Town Garage
Ashford	Senior Center @ 25 Tremko Lane
Bolton	Town Hall @ 222 Bolton Center Rd
Chaplin	Fire House @ 106 Phoenixville Rd
Columbia	Beckish Senior Center @ 188 Rt. 66
Coventry	Town Hall Annex @ 1712 Main Street
Mansfield	Mansfield Community Center @ 10 South Eagleville Rd. Town Hall @ 4 South Eagleville Rd.
Scotland	Community Hall @ 34 Brooks Road
Tolland	Fire Station 191 Merrow Road (hwy 195) Senior Center @ 674 Tolland Stage Road
Willington	TBD