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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Use Caution when Operating Generators *Can Cause Carbon Monoxide Poisoning*

Sauk County Public Health would like to warn residents in flooded areas to protect themselves against carbon monoxide poisoning when operating generators.

Many people turn to generators when flooding knocks out power, but carbon monoxide poisoning poses a real danger when generators are not used safely. Do not run a generator inside your home, or outdoors near windows or air intakes for air conditioning systems.

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas produced when fuels such as gasoline, kerosene, wood, coal, oil, natural gas and charcoal do not have enough oxygen to burn completely. Common symptoms of exposure to carbon monoxide are headache, fatigue, dizziness, shortness of breath, nausea and mental confusion. Continued exposure may lead to more serious health problems, including death.

As an added precaution, be sure to have an operating carbon monoxide detector inside your home. If your carbon monoxide detector alert goes off or if family members exhibit symptoms, get fresh air immediately. Call 911 and do not re-enter the building until it has been inspected and declared safe.

Carbon monoxide detectors can be purchased at most hardware stores and function similar to smoke detectors. They should be placed on each floor of the home, with at least one placed near the bedrooms.

For more information on safe generator use, visit the State of Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services' website at <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/Air/fs/generators.htm> . For additional health and safety tips during flood recovery efforts, visit <http://www.co.sauk.wi.us/> .