



After a Flood: Carbon Monoxide and Generator Use

Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change (ECC) recommends that you prepare for emergencies at work and at home. Emergencies can include hurricanes, floods, winter storms and power outages.

- Your home should be stocked with a three-day supply of water, canned and dried foods and prescription medicines as well as emergency supplies such as flashlights, a battery-operated or hand-crank radio, batteries, a first-aid kit and a thermometer.
- In the event of an emergency, alerts will be broadcast through Alert Ready on radio stations and cable providers, as well as Twitter and Facebook through the Emergency Management Office.
- More information on emergency plans and emergency supply kits is available from the [Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office](#).

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

What is carbon monoxide?

- Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colourless gas that can cause sudden illness and death if inhaled.
- CO is found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by small gasoline engines, stoves, generators, lanterns and gas ranges or by burning charcoal and wood.
- If these sources are used indoors, or in enclosed spaces, CO can build to dangerous levels, which can cause loss of consciousness and death. Symptoms include dizziness, headache, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion.

Every home should have at least one working carbon monoxide detector. The detector's batteries should be checked twice a year, at the same time smoke detector batteries are checked.

- Never use a gas range or oven to heat a home.
- Never use a charcoal grill, hibachi, lantern or portable camping stove inside a home, camper or tent.

- Never use a generator inside a home, basement or garage, even if the doors and windows are open, unless the equipment is professionally installed and vented.
- If conditions are too hot or too cold, seek shelter with friends or at a community shelter.
- If CO poisoning is suspected, consult a health care professional right away.

Generators

Buying a Generator

Make sure you buy a generator that is rated for the amount of power that you think you will need. Look at the labels on lighting, appliances and equipment you plan to connect to the generator to determine the amount of power that will be needed to operate the equipment. Using a Generator

The primary hazards to avoid when using a generator are carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from the toxic engine exhaust, electric shock or electrocution, and fire.

- Follow the directions supplied with the generator.
- Never use a generator indoors or inside garages.
- Turn the generator off and let it cool down before refueling.
- Plug appliances directly into the generator or use a heavy duty, outdoor-rated extension cord.