

Christie Administration Issues Storm Fire Safety Precautions

Monday, October 29, 2012 Tags: [Hurricane Sandy](#)

Trenton, NJ – New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Richard E. Constance, III today issued a warning to residents regarding potential dangers as a result of the effects of Hurricane Sandy. New Jerseyans should be prepared for the possibility of the loss of electric power, in some cases for extended periods of time.

"In similar situations, there have been a number of tragedies from the use of portable generators, candles and people coming into contact with downed power lines," said Commissioner Constance. "It is imperative that people pay attention to these warnings to ensure they do not become a victim of a preventable accident."

Acting Division of Fire Safety Director William Kramer, Jr., warns that gasoline and diesel powered generators release a large amount of carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless gas.

"Running generators within a basement, garage or any enclosed or partially enclosed structure will lead to a dangerous and often fatal accumulation of carbon monoxide," said Acting Director Kramer. "Because the gas is odorless and colorless, the effects are not recognized and people can fall asleep. When this happens, it is usually too late for them to survive."

The Division of Fire Safety recommends that generators only be used outdoors and well away from any structure. Also, never refill a generator with fuel while it is running or hot.

When electric power is out, many people turn to candles for light, which is dangerous. Candles are meant for effect and smell, not for lighting. They should never be left unattended, placed in areas where children or pets could knock them over, placed near combustible materials such as curtains, or kept burning while people are sleeping. If candles are used, make sure they are on a surface where they cannot slip or be knocked over.

It is not unusual during episodes of high wind for power lines to be blown down or taken down by falling trees. The Division of Fire Safety warns that every downed wire should be considered energized. People should stay away from them and contact their electricity provider. Also, be cautious when handling downed trees as live electrical lines may be hidden in the tree.

"Even if you know that the downed line is not electric, it could be wrapped around and energized by a live wire. Stay away," Acting Director Kramer said.

The Division of Fire Safety serves as the central fire service agency in the State. The Division is responsible for the development and enforcement of the State Uniform Fire Code, as well as for implementing public education and firefighter training programs.

For more information, log on to <http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dfs/> on the DCA website.

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