

Search All of NJ [input] Submit

Home Newsroom Media Administration NJ's Priorities Contact Us

Press Releases Public Addresses Executive Orders Press Kit Reports

Home > Newsroom > Press Releases > 2012 > Christie Administration Urges Precautions on Use of Alternative Heating Devices During Extended Power Outages

Christie Administration Urges Precautions on Use of Alternative Heating Devices During Extended Power Outages

Monday, November 5, 2012 Tags: [Hurricane Sandy](#)

Trenton, NJ - As temperatures become colder, households without electricity are turning to home heating alternatives, which can be dangerous if not properly used. As a result, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Richard E. Constable, III today issued precautions on the use of heating devices such as kerosene heaters, wood stoves and fireplaces. He also re-issued a warning on the carbon monoxide dangers of portable generators.

"With many households, especially those in communities affected by storm surge from Hurricane Sandy, continuing to suffer through days and nights without electricity and natural gas, people are increasingly using heating alternatives to keep warm," said Commissioner Constable. "We urge people to take the proper precautions when heating their home through alternative means. The last thing we want to see is more lives lost to Hurricane Sandy and the aftereffects of the storm."

Residents are urged to avoid fire and carbon monoxide hazards by following these tips:

Kerosene Heaters:

- Check if your local town code permits the use of kerosene heaters. Such heaters are prohibited in all but one- and two-family houses in New Jersey, and are completely banned in some municipalities.
- Make certain the heater is in proper working order by inspecting the exhaust for carbon buildup and by making sure there is an emergency "knock over" switch.
- Never use the heater without proper ventilation. Burning fossil fuels produces deadly carbon monoxide gases.
- Use only the recommended fuel for the unit. Never mix in or use another type of liquid fuel.
- Never refill the heater while it is operating or when it is hot, and refuel outdoors.
- Use only approved fuel containers. Keep additional fuel stored away from the home and young children especially.
- Enforce a "kid zone" or "pet zone" around the heater. Make sure children and pets are not within three feet of the unit.

Wood Stoves and Fireplaces:

- Be sure the wood stove or fireplace has adequate clearance (at least three feet) from combustible materials, as well as proper floor support and protection.
- Check that the wood stove is of good quality, construction, and design; and has been laboratory tested. If it doesn't meet these standards, don't use it.
- Have the chimney inspected before any use and cleaned if necessary.
- Do not use flammable liquids to start or accelerate any fire.
- Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace opening to prevent embers or sparks from escaping and unwanted material from going in, and to help prevent the possibility of burns to people.
- Burn a wood stove at least twice a day for 15-30 minutes to reduce the amount of creosote buildup.
- Do not use excessive amounts of paper to build roaring fires in fireplaces. It is possible to ignite creosote in the chimney by overbuilding the fire.
- Never burn charcoal indoors. Burning charcoal can give off lethal amounts of carbon monoxide.
- Keep flammable materials away from the fireplace mantel. A spark from the fireplace can ignite these materials.
- Be sure a fireplace fire is out before going to sleep.
- Never close a damper with hot ashes in the fireplace. A closed damper will help the fire to heat up again and will force toxic carbon monoxide into the house.
- Follow the directions on the package when using composite logs. Never break a synthetic log apart to quicken the fire or use more than one log at a time. They often burn unevenly, releasing higher levels of carbon monoxide.

Stay Connected with Social Media

Stay Connected with Email Alerts

[input]

LIKE THIS PAGE? SHARE IT WITH YOUR FRIENDS.

SHARE [social icons]

Place ashes in a suitable metal container, make sure the embers are extinguished, and take them outdoors immediately. Make sure that the ashes are not placed near anything flammable.

"In Connecticut last year, the lives of a family of five were lost when bagged hot ashes from their fireplace were placed in the home's mudroom and sparked a fire," said Acting State Fire Marshal and Division of Fire Safety Director William Kramer. "We understand people need to keep themselves and their loved ones warm, but we encourage residents to be smart and safe about it."

In advance of Hurricane Sandy, Commissioner Constable issued a warning to residents regarding the potential carbon monoxide dangers of portable generators. With the news of several deaths from the fumes of gas- or diesel-powered generators, the Commissioner is re-issuing the following generator safety warnings:

Portable Generators:

Do not run a generator within a basement, garage, three-season room, or any enclosed or partially enclosed structure as it will lead to a dangerous and often fatal accumulation of carbon monoxide.

Position generators outdoors and well away from any structure.

Never refill a generator with fuel while it is running or hot.

Follow the manufacturer's safety instructions.

He also reminded households that kitchen ovens should never be used for heating.

In addition to these tips, it is critical that households install, test and maintain smoke alarms and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors in their homes, said Acting State Fire Marshal Kramer. These devices should be placed, at minimum, on each floor of a home, outside of all sleeping areas, and in the basement. The Division of Fire Safety also suggests alarms and detectors in each bedroom.

The Division of Fire Safety serves as the central fire service agency in New Jersey. 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.

###

Press Contact:
Michael Drewniak
Kevin Roberts
609-777-2600



[Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [Legal Statement & Disclaimers](#) | [Accessibility Statement](#) | 

Statewide: [NJ Home](#) | [Services A to Z](#) | [Departments/Agencies](#) | [FAQs](#)
Office of the Governor: [Home](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Media](#) | [Administration](#) | [NJ's Priorities](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2018
Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000