

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Exercise Caution When Using Generators During Power Outage**

GRAND RAPIDS – Residents are reminded to exercise extreme caution when using generators as an auxiliary power source during the current power outage. Generators are a leading source of deadly carbon monoxide poisoning.

Deaths from carbon monoxide poisoning from generators are reported by the Michigan Department of Community Health every year in Michigan. In 2011 (the last year for which statewide data is available), six people died from carbon monoxide as a result of improper generator use. That year, 10.5% of carbon monoxide poisonings were caused by generators. In all, generators poisoned ninety-eight people in 2011. Generators caused one if four (27 %) of the 22 CO deaths in 2011, and 15.3% of hospitalizations. Generators are second only to malfunctioning furnaces and water heaters as a source for carbon monoxide poisoning in Michigan.

The reason why generators are so problematic is because people commonly use them in indoor spaces, such as garages, basements and enclosed porches. Generators are not designed for indoor use and should only be used outdoors and away from open windows, doors, intake ventilation and other openings into the home.

“Too often people use generators indoors because of lack of awareness or because of concerns that the generator might get stolen if left outdoors,” said Paul Haan, Executive Director at the Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan. “We urge everyone that uses a generator to only use it outdoors and far away from the home. If you are concerned about theft, lock the generator to a tree or other secure object. Even using a generator in a garage with an open door can be deadly.”

Carbon monoxide is a clear, odorless, tasteless gas that starves the body of oxygen. At low levels, it can make people sick with flu-like symptoms. At high levels it can kill. Carbon monoxide is the leading cause of accidental poisoning death in the United States according the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For more information on carbon monoxide, vsist [www.healthyhomescoalition.org/carbon-monoxide](http://www.healthyhomescoalition.org/carbon-monoxide).

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