



Winter Weather Emergency Preparedness

(Family Features) As temperatures drop, the risk of severe winter weather conditions and sudden power outages rise. Preparing your family ahead of time can help minimize the impact of a power loss.



Having an emergency preparation plan lets your family immediately shift into a proactive stance when an unexpected event, like power loss, occurs. Your plan may include assembling an emergency kit and talking with your kids about how to respond in certain situations, as well as assessing your supplies and resources. This includes items like blankets, non-perishable food, flashlights and batteries. Families can also benefit from portable generators, which reduce worries and risks associated with unexpected power outages.

Portable generators provide reliable backup energy during dangerous power outages so you're ready for whatever winter may bring. However, portable generators can also pose serious health risks when used improperly. Before severe winter weather hits, consider educating yourself about how to safely protect your family.

Generator models that comply with the American National Standards Institute/Portable Generator Manufacturers' Association G300 Standard, for example, provide enhanced safety through carbon monoxide sensors and shutdown features that help protect your family from dangerous carbon monoxide buildup.

Whether you purchase a new generator or rely on an older model, the Portable Generator Manufacturers' Association recommends these safety precautions to safely use your portable generator and avoid the dangers misuse and carbon monoxide can present:

- Always read the operator's manual first and follow the manufacturer's recommended precautions and procedures, as well as instruction on safe operation and potential hazards.
- Know that you cannot smell, see or taste carbon monoxide, so proper use of portable generators is crucial.
- To avoid dangerous carbon monoxide accumulation, always "[Take It Outside.](#)" This means you should never run a portable generator indoors in areas such as garages, basements, crawl spaces, breezeways, sheds or other partially enclosed spaces.
- Always place a portable generator downwind and point the engine exhaust away from occupied spaces.
- Avoid placing a portable generator near windows, doors or vents, as carbon monoxide gas can accumulate and potentially be drawn indoors.



- Install battery-operated carbon monoxide alarms in your home. Replace the batteries and test the alarms regularly to ensure they are in good working condition.
- Learn to recognize the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning: headache, nausea, dizziness, shortness of breath, weakness and fainting.
- If you feel sick, dizzy or weak while using a portable generator, get to fresh air immediately and call 911 for emergency medical attention.

Learn more about safely operating a portable generator during severe weather at pgmaonline.com and takeyourgeneratoroutside.com.

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