



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES
BUREAU FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Commissioner's Office

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IMPORTANT JULY 2017 FLOODING INFORMATION

TO: Local Health Departments
FROM: Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, FACP
Commissioner and State Health Officer
DATE: JULY 29, 2017
RE: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health is informing all Local Health Departments (LHDs) of important health information as a result of the July 2017 flooding occurring in the state.

Unsafe use of generators and grills can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning

Many residents turn to gasoline generators, gas or charcoal grills and camp stoves during extensive power outages should they occur as a result of flooding. The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health is reminding residents that these appliances may be harmful or even deadly when used improperly because of carbon monoxide (CO).

It is important to remember to never use generators and charcoal or gas grills inside your home, in basements, in garages, or other enclosed spaces due to the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Residents should not operate these appliances near an open window or window air conditioner which may allow fumes to enter the home.

CO is an odorless, colorless, poisonous gas that can cause sudden illness and death if present in sufficient concentration in the ambient air. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and altered mental status. Get fresh air immediately and call 911 if you suspect that you or a family member has carbon monoxide poisoning.

More information about CO is available online at
http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/co_guidance.asp