



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

**Texas Department of State
Health Services**

Health officials alert public to carbon monoxide dangers

With power outages from this week's winter storm affecting large portions of Texas, the Texas Department of State Health Services is urging people to use extreme caution with electric generators and heat sources that produce carbon monoxide.

Generators should only be placed outdoors at least 10 feet away from buildings. They should never be operated indoors or in garages. Likewise, cars should not be run inside a garage, even with the door open, because carbon monoxide can build up, leading to death. Outdoor grills, camp stoves and other appliances meant for open-air use should not be used to heat a home because they, too, create carbon monoxide.

Carbon monoxide is an odorless and invisible gas produced by burning gasoline, propane, wood, charcoal and other fuel. If it builds up in a confined space and people breathe it in, it can replace the oxygen in their blood leading to carbon monoxide poisoning and death.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include dizziness, drowsiness, severe headache, weakness, nausea and confusion. Anyone with one or more of these symptoms should go – or be moved to – a well-ventilated area outdoors and receive immediate medical attention.

People without power can take steps to stay warm by:

- Closing blinds or curtains to trap heat inside.
- Closing off rooms to avoid wasting heat.
- Stuffing towels or rags in cracks under doors.
- Eating and drinking because food can warm the body.
- Wear multiple layers of warm, loose-fitting clothing.

Those who need a warm place to go due to the winter weather affecting Texas can locate approximately 200 warming centers across the state at tdem.texas.gov/warming-centers.