



NEWS RELEASE



Chico Fire Prevention & Life Safety Bureau

Contact: Marie Fickert Pager: 530-516-4659 Date: December 2009

RE: Cold Weather and Generator Safety Tips

Chico - The City of Chico Fire Department encourages our community to be prepared for the upcoming winter season. Start the new year off on the right foot by creating an emergency kit that is filled with provisions that will allow your family to be self sufficient for 3 days. Consider using several backpacks that could hold all of your supplies and still be portable if you need to evacuate on foot. Many people place their emergency kit in the trunk of their vehicle, so it is available at all times . Make sure that you include non-perishable food, such as power bars, trail mix and dried fruit. Never use a charcoal Bar-B-Q indoors due to the carbon monoxide risk. Include a 3 day supply of pet food in your kit. Include a minimum of one gallon of water per day per person or pet. Your kit should include rain ponchos and emergency blankets that will provide warmth for each family member. Instead of using candles, which pose a fire risk, stock a good supply of flashlights with fresh batteries or the hand crank or shake types. Include a battery powered or hand crank radio that be utilized during a power outage to find out about weather conditions, road closures and evacuation information. Consider cell phone car chargers that could be utilized during a power outage. Your kit should also include a fresh supply of prescription medication, first aid kit and a medical emergency instruction booklet. Consider including cash in your kit, as Automatic Teller Machines (A.T.M.) may not be working. Make sure your vehicle has a full tank of gas, is in good repair and you have working windshield wipers.

During weather related power outages some people may use portable generators. The Chico Fire Department reminds residents that the primary hazards involving portable generators are carbon monoxide poisoning, electrical shock or electrocution and fire. To avoid carbon monoxide hazards, remember to always use your generator outdoors. Generators should never be used inside a home or garage. Install a battery powered carbon monoxide detectors in your home that can alert occupants if carbon monoxide is detected. Remember that carbon monoxide is odorless, colorless and is a toxic gas that can kill you before you are even aware that it is in your home. Unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning kills more than 500 people each year and sends over 15,000 people to the hospital. Carbon Monoxide poisoning symptoms include headaches, dizziness, disorientation, nausea and fatigue. Carbon Monoxide can be produced by generators, gas-fired appliances, charcoal Bar-B-Q grills, wood-burning furnaces or fireplaces and motor vehicles. If your carbon monoxide detector activates and occupants are feeling ill, evacuate immediately and call 9-1-1. Once you are medically evaluate and treated, contact a professional to repair the source of the Carbon Monoxide before you reoccupy the home. To avoid electrical hazards, keep your generator dry. Never touch the generator with wet hands. Plug appliances directly into the generator or use a heavy-duty outdoor-rated extension cord. NEVER plug the generator into a wall outlet, as it can cause backfeeding, which can cause an electrocution risk to utility workers and others served by the same utility transformer. Contact your utility company for additional generator safety information.

To avoid fire hazards, remember to turn off your generator and let it cool before you refuel it. Spilled fuel on hot engine parts could ignite. Always store fuel away from any fuel burning appliance and outside of living areas. For further information please contact the City of Chico Fire Department at 530-897-3400, Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

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