



The New Jersey Poison Information & Education System — Serving New Jersey Since 1983

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Major Storm Predicted to Hit New Jersey in the Coming Days**

- Gas Powered Generators Increase the Risk for Carbon Monoxide Poisoning During Bad Weather --

Steven Marcus, Executive and Medical Director,  
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New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

*Available for Interviews*

**BREAKING NEWS:** Severe storm predicted to hit New Jersey may cause electrical outages. Carbon monoxide poisoning is an immediate danger and more prevalent during bad weather.

### **Safety Tips to Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning During Bad Weather:**

1. Do not bring portable gas powered generator into the home or garage - Do not place them outside near any open windows.
2. Do not bring other gas powered equipment, propane stoves, or charcoal grills into the house or garage.
3. Never cook with charcoal indoors.
4. Check the batteries on your carbon monoxide detector. If you don't have a detector, install one before the bad weather hits.
5. Keep your home well ventilated. If need be, keep a window slightly cracked to allow air flow.
6. Do not idle a car in a closed garage. Once you pull in, immediately turn off the engine.
7. Have a flash light and/or candles and matches at the ready.

### **Safety Tips to Prevent Food Spoilage During a Power Outage:**

1. In preparing for a power outage, make the temperature colder than usual on both freezers and refrigerators to prolong the cold after a power outage.
2. During a power outage, keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed and open them only when necessary.
3. Place a refrigerator thermometer in the center of the middle shelf and check the temperature. If it has risen to 45 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, discard any potentially spoiled foods. Such foods include meat, poultry, fish, dairy and egg products, soft cheese, cooked beans, cooked rice, cooked potatoes, cooked pasta, potato salad, custard and pudding.
4. When power is restored, allow time for the refrigerator to reach below 40 degrees Fahrenheit before restocking.
5. "When in doubt, throw it out!"

### **If you suspect Carbon Monoxide Poisoning, Take Immediate Action:**

1. Call 911 immediately if your loved one is not breathing, unconscious/unresponsive, bleeding profusely, seizing/convulsing, etc.
2. Exit the house/building immediately. Do not waste time opening windows to "air" it out; this will delay your escape and cause you to breathe in more dangerous fumes.
3. Contact your local fire department.
4. Call the NJ Poison Experts, 800-222-1222, for immediate treatment advice. Do not waste time looking for information on the internet about carbon monoxide poisoning. Call us for fast, free and accurate information.

**(Newark, NJ) - October 25, 2012** — Meteorologists are predicting a major storm to hit New Jersey early next week. With severe rain expected, the New Jersey Poison Experts are warning the public to take the necessary steps to make sure the storms pass as safely as possible.

During bad weather, it is not uncommon for homes and offices to experience power outages. Residents tend to close down their homes and frequently bring items indoors that are potentially more dangerous than the bad weather outside. After the storm passes, the heavy rainfall and flooding will leave many residents with significant damage to their homes and businesses. **Portable generators and other gasoline powered equipment are often used during the cleanup process, but using them indoors is dangerous and potentially poisonous.**

Carbon monoxide poisoning is often referred to as the Silent Killer because it is a gas that gives no warning – you can't see it, smell it or taste it. When the gas is breathed into the body it combines with the body's blood and prevents it from absorbing oxygen. Since this gas is easily detected with an installed and fully functional carbon monoxide detector, the NJ Poison experts highly recommend that everyone install carbon monoxide detectors in his or her home. Exposure to carbon monoxide can produce headaches, sleepiness, fatigue, confusion and irritability at low levels. At higher levels, it can result in nausea, vomiting, irregular heartbeat, impaired vision and coordination, and death.

With the potential threat of power outages, it is important to be careful about food stored in refrigerators and freezers. Food-borne illness, also known as food poisoning, results from the eating of food that is contaminated with harmful bacteria, viruses or other foreign material. Contamination is caused by improper food handling and preparation practices. The symptoms of food-borne illness are flu-like and may include abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and fever.

### **Help is Just a Phone Call Away**

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, or have questions about the safety of an item in your home, call the **NJ Poison Experts at (1-800-222-1222)**. They are always here to help with accidents or questions involving medicines, chemicals or household products, etc. Help is available in over 150 languages; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. Program the Poison Help line (800-222-1222) into your cell phone and post it near your home and office phones too. There are no silly questions and trained medical staff are always available to answer a question, quell a fear, provide advice, or intervene to get emergency services on site and prepped to provide the needed protocol in the fastest response time. When in doubt, check it out - Prevention is truly the best possible medicine.

## **Real People. Real Answers.**

Follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/njpies](http://www.facebook.com/njpies)) and Twitter ([@NJPoisonCenter](https://twitter.com/NJPoisonCenter)) to be poison smart. Be a poison prevention superhero - share poison prevention tips with your family (including children), friends, and coworkers.

### **Call to Action – Help is Just a Phone Call Away**

NJPIES leaders urge medical professionals, parents, educators, caregivers and the general public to call the toll-free poison center hot line, 800-222-1222, with any poison related question as well as for non-emergency questions regarding medications, household products, plants, environmental contaminants, or other poisons. The hotline is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You may also chat or text in using our website, [www.njpies.org](http://www.njpies.org). **Real People. Real Answers.**

The NJ poison experts recommend putting the number in all family cell phones as well as programming it as a speed dial number on landlines (home and office). In addition, prominently post the number near all phones in the home and office.

Follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/njpies](http://www.facebook.com/njpies)) and Twitter ([@NJPoisonCenter](https://twitter.com/NJPoisonCenter)) for breaking news, safety tips, trivia questions, etc.

### **About NJPIES**

As New Jersey's only poison control center, the New Jersey Poison Information & Education System provides information on poison prevention and treatments. Chartered in 1983, NJPIES provides free consultation through telephone hot line services and the Web. Medical professionals such as physicians, registered nurses and pharmacists offer confidential advice regarding poison emergencies and provide information on poison prevention, drugs, food poisoning, animal bites and more. These specialists are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

NJPIES coordinates state poison education and research and is designated as the regional poison center by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services and the American Association of Poison Control Centers. It tracks incidences of adverse reactions to food, drugs and vaccines in order to monitor potential public health issues and provide data to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A division of the Department of Preventive Medicine and

Community Health of the New Jersey Medical School of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. NJPIES has a state-of-the-art center located on the school's Newark campus.

New Jersey residents seeking immediate information about treating poison emergencies, and those with any drug information questions, should call the toll-free hot line, **800-222-1222**, any time. The hearing impaired may call **973-926-8008**. For more information, visit [www.njpies.org](http://www.njpies.org) or call **973-972-9280**.

#### **About UMDNJ**

The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey is the nation's largest freestanding public health sciences university, with more than 5,500 students attending. The state's three medical schools, a dental school, a graduate school of biomedical sciences, a school of health-related professions, a school of nursing and a school of public health are housed on five campuses — Newark, New Brunswick/Piscataway, Scotch Plains, Camden and Stratford. Annually, there are more than 2 million patient visits at UMDNJ facilities and faculty practices at the campuses. UMDNJ operates University Hospital, a level I trauma center in Newark, and University Behavioral HealthCare, a mental health and addiction services network.

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