



News for Immediate Release

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Pennsylvanians Affected by Power Outages Urged to Take Important Steps to Avoid Carbon Monoxide Poisoning, Hypothermia

Harrisburg –Pennsylvanians who are still experiencing power outages after Hurricane Sandy are encouraged to take simple steps to keep themselves and their loved ones safe until electricity is restored.

“Although the storm itself has passed, there are still serious dangers associated with its aftermath, especially for people without electricity or heat,” Acting Secretary of Health Michael Wolf said. “Two of the biggest hazards are carbon monoxide poisoning and hypothermia, which can cause serious illness or even death.”

If you are without power and are staying in your home, Wolf stressed the importance of following some common sense tips to stay healthy.

- **Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning**
Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that is made by many types of equipment, builds up in closed spaces, and is poisonous to breathe. Never use equipment, like generators, inside your home, basement or garage or near a window, door or vent. Leave your home immediately and call 911 if your carbon monoxide detector sounds. Get medical help right away if symptoms such as dizziness, light-headedness or nausea occur.
- **Keep as warm as possible when your power is out**
Hypothermia is a serious condition that happens when your body temperature is too low. This usually happens in very cold weather, but can also happen even at temperatures of 40 degrees or higher. Those most at risk include older Pennsylvanians and babies sleeping in cold rooms. Adults should seek medical help if they are experiencing: shivering, exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, slurred speech or drowsiness. Get medical help immediately for your baby if he or she has bright red, cold skin or very low energy.

“If your power remains out, stay with a relative or friend, or go to an emergency shelter,” Wolf added.

For more information about staying safe after Hurricane Sandy, visit www.health.state.pa.us and choose “Click Here for Post Sandy Information” at the top of the page.

You can also visit www.pa.gov for more information.

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