



U.S. EPA HURRICANE RESPONSE 2017

Air Quality

www.epa.gov/hurricane-response

Office of Air and Radiation Actions

EPA coordinates with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. Consumer Product and Safety Commission (CPSC), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other federal agencies on issues regarding flooding, mold and indoor air quality.

How to Safely Use Portable Generators

- Due to loss of electricity, gasoline or diesel-powered generators may be used in the aftermath of floods. These devices release [carbon monoxide](#), a colorless, odorless and deadly gas.
- Portable generators should never be used indoors. Place generators outside and as far away from buildings as possible. Do not put portable generators on balconies or near doors, vents, windows or near where anyone sleeps.
- Simply opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent carbon monoxide buildup from portable generator use in the home or in partially enclosed areas such as a garage.

Dangers of Carbon Monoxide

- Carbon monoxide resulting from improper use of portable generators is one of the most significant threats following a power outage. Carbon monoxide can build up quickly indoors and can linger for hours.
- At elevated levels, carbon monoxide can cause significant harm and even death.
- Guidance on carbon monoxide, the proper use of portable generators and emergencies and indoor air quality:
<https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/emergencies-and-iaq>
<https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/carbon-monoxide-impact-indoor-air-quality>
<https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/flood-cleanup-protect-indoor-air-quality>

Flood Cleanup in Homes

- Removing contaminated materials caused by flood damage from homes and reducing moisture and humidity inside can prevent serious long-term health risks. Mold develops quickly after a flood.
- Standing water and wet materials are a breeding ground for microorganisms, such as viruses, bacteria and mold. They can cause disease, trigger allergic reactions and continue to damage materials long after the flood.
- People entering a home contaminated with heavy mold for any reason should wear an N-95 Respirator to avoid inhaling mold. They can be found at hardware stores. More information can be found at:
<https://www.epa.gov/mold/floods-and-mold-growth>.

Resources

- Booklets and posters for residential flood-cleanup scenarios in English, Spanish and Vietnamese in PDF and ready-to-print files for professional printers can be downloaded and customized with local information here:
<https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/flood-cleanup-protect-indoor-air-quality>
- Mold and mold remediation:
<https://www.epa.gov/mold>
<https://www.epa.gov/mold/mold-remediation-schools-and-commercial-buildings-guide>
- Worker safety:
<https://epa.gov/mold/mold-cleanup-after-floods>
- General information on emergencies and indoor air quality, comprehensive information on power outages, portable generators, and actions to moderate temperatures during power outages:
<https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/emergencies-and-iaq>