



**FLORIDA/USVI POISON INFORMATION CENTER - JACKSONVILLE**

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## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# FLORIDA'S POISON CONTROL CENTERS REPORT INCREASE IN CARBON MONOXIDE EXPOSURES FOLLOWING HURRICANE IRMA

JACKSONVILLE, FL (September 13, 2017) — Dozens of families have been exposed to carbon monoxide across Florida in the wake of Hurricane Irma. As of today, Florida's Poison Control Centers have been contacted for treatment advice on 88 patients, and officials are urging residents to take precautions to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning related to generator use.

"If you are using a portable generator, it is imperative to follow safety instructions to avoid an emergency," said Jay L. Schauben, Pharm D, DABAT, FAACT, Director of the Florida/USVI Poison Information Center – Jacksonville. "Carbon monoxide poisoning is preventable but it is the most common poison-related cause of hospitalization and death following a hurricane."

Carbon monoxide is called a "silent killer" because there are no odors or specific symptoms that signal a problem. When people use generators improperly – too close to homes, in garages, or outside bedroom windows – carbon monoxide can seep in and sicken or kill. Open windows or outside garage doors do not provide adequate ventilation for generators or other gas-powered equipment.

The Florida/USVI Poison Information Center – Jacksonville offers the following tips for using portable generators safely:

- Follow the manufacturer's safety instructions.
- Never use portable generators indoors, in garages, or near open windows. Make sure it's in a well-ventilated location 20+ feet away from all doors, windows, and vent openings.
- Use battery-operated carbon monoxide alarms. Be sure to test the batteries.
- Do not siphon gasoline by mouth to fill a generator with fuel.
- Do not fill generator with gas while it is running.
- If you experience sleepiness, dizziness, headaches, confusion, weakness, or your carbon monoxide alarm sounds, seek fresh air IMMEDIATELY and call 800-222-1222 if you have questions.

More carbon monoxide poison prevention tips are available on the Florida Poison Control Center website at <http://floridapoisontcontrol.org/poisoning-in-florida/carbon-monoxide>

For more information or to schedule an interview, the media may contact Brie Burge, Media Relations/Education Associate, at 904.244.7978 or [burge@poison.ufl.edu](mailto:burge@poison.ufl.edu).

*The mission of the Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville is to provide exceptional care for individual patients and for supporting public health through information, surveillance, education, and research. Experts staff the Poison Help Hotline at 800.222.1222 that provides free, confidential, expert medical advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year from toxicology specialists, including nurses, pharmacists, physicians, and poison information providers.*

*The Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville is a cooperative effort between the University of Florida College of Medicine, UF Health Jacksonville, the University of Florida Health Science Center - Jacksonville, and the State of Florida, Department of Health, Children's Medical Services. The Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville is designated as an accredited regional poison control center by the American Association of Poison Control Centers. To learn more, visit [floridapoisontcontrol.org](http://floridapoisontcontrol.org), like us on [Facebook](#), and follow us on Twitter ([@FloridaPoison](#)).*

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