



News Release

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Louisiana State Fire Marshal Urges Generator Safety

Baton Rouge, LA – Louisiana State Fire Marshal H. “Butch” Browning warns against placing gas- or diesel-driven generators inside enclosed areas. The day after Hurricane Gustav tore through Louisiana, Calcasieu Parish Sheriff’s Deputy Eric Joseph Bellard and his father, Danis, died from carbon monoxide asphyxiation from the fumes of a generator inside Deputy Bellard’s workshop.

“These tragic deaths,” says Browning, “emphasize the fact that no one should take gasoline-operated generators for granted. Each generator puts out about the same carbon monoxide as six (6) idling automobile engines, and since you cannot smell C-O gas, it is a silent killer.”

Browning says all generators should be at least 20 feet outside a house in a well-ventilated area, such as a patio or backyard. He says, “Do NOT put generators inside carports, garages, utility rooms, workshops, any place that is enclosed. The only place a generator can be safely operated is OUTSIDE in the open with electrical connections waterproofed.”

Browning says generator owners should be keenly aware of any openings where fumes from a generator can enter a home. Since residents may be weeks without power, he says, most houses will have windows open for ventilation. “Make sure your generator is down-wind of open windows, including those of your neighbors,” says Browning.

The State Fire Marshal also reiterates that qualified electricians should install direct connections from a generator into the wiring of a house. Improper connection could result in fire or electrocution of either the resident or repair crews working on power lines near the house.

For more information, check the Fire Marshal’s website www.lasfm.org or call 225-295-4911.

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