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OFFICIALS WARN OF CARBON MONOXIDE/ ELECTRICAL STORM DANGERS

CONCORD, N.H. – Utility crews and homeowners are cleaning up after the second worst ice storm in two decades. But more winter weather is on the way for New Hampshire and state emergency management officials are urging caution in the use of generators and alternative heating sources when power is cut off.

“A lot of people got through the recent power outages with home generators,” said Christopher M. Pope, N.H. Director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. “Generators should never be operated in enclosed spaces, such as basements and garages, because they produce deadly carbon monoxide.”

“In a conference call with local emergency management directors, the EMDs expressed concern about the improper use of generators and heating equipment,” Pope said.

Pope added that generator hookups should be professionally installed by a qualified electrician and have a transfer switch to safely switch from commercial power to generator operation.

He also cautioned against cooking or heating during a power outage by using an outdoor appliance inside a dwelling.

“Charcoal or gas grills are designed for outdoor use,” said Pope. “They generate carbon monoxide and can be deadly if used indoors.”

He also said torches should never be used to thaw frozen pipes because of the danger of fire.

Pope offered the following tips for winter storm safety:

- Report power outages to your utility company. They may not know about your problem.
- Stay clear of downed power lines. They may be live even if they are not sparking.
- Keep flashlights and fresh batteries on hand for light during power outages - not candles, which can cause fires.
- Have a battery-powered radio or TV on hand to stay informed. Officials will use the news media to convey emergency information.
- Keep a supply of emergency food and water for several days on hand. All emergency supplies should be replenished after use.
- For police, fire or medical emergencies assistance, call 911. For other storm-related assistance call your local emergency management office.