



UNITED STATES
CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20207

Memorandum

Date: October 12, 2005

TO : Patricia Semple, Executive Director
FROM : Hal Stratton, Chairman
SUBJECT : Review of Portable Generator Safety

In light of carbon monoxide (CO) deaths and injuries attributable to the consumer use of portable generators, I direct the staff to undertake a thorough review of the status of portable generator safety. The staff's review should address the following issues at a minimum:

1. Feasibility of safety cut-offs that would shut down a generator before CO reaches unsafe levels;
2. Sufficiency of warning labels to address the danger of CO poisoning associated with portable generators used within or near residences;
3. Development of portable generator performance requirements that would substantially reduce CO emissions;
4. Feasibility of weatherization of portable generators (including ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection) for use in wet and/or cold outdoor environments;
5. Creation of an information and education campaign, including partnering with other federal agencies (including but not limited to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)), and private sector (American Red Cross, retail/hardware trade associations) to spread message through various media;
6. Potential benefits of the creation of a private sector consortium made up of generator manufacturers that would cooperatively develop a technical solution that adequately addresses the current CO poisoning hazard.

This review should include not only an assessment of the existing voluntary standards and industry practices with regard to safe generator use, but also an exhaustive summary of other potential methods for improving portable generator safety. Additionally, CPSC staff is to continue to monitor the on-going efforts to address this issue within the voluntary standards arena.

The staff should report the results of their comprehensive review to the Commission as soon as is feasible. It would be my intent that this review be given priority in the staff and Commission's agenda.