*Use this or similar language for an op/ed below to submit to your local newspaper. Contact your newspaper's editor to find out how much advance notice you'll need to give. Don’t forget to follow up with a telephone call or email to make sure your contact received the op/ed. You'll be helping residents of your community learn what they can do to make their homes safe from carbon monoxide.*

**Stay Alive/Use Portable Generators Safely Op/Ed**

A portable generator can be a lifesaver when the power goes out by keeping the electricity on and appliances running in your home. But a portable generator can also cost you your life if it’s not used properly.

Generators produce extremely high levels of poisonous carbon monoxide (CO). So much, in fact, that it can take just a few minutes for the CO from a portable generator to kill you and your family. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission’s (CPSC) latest data, an average of 65 people die due to CO poisoning associated with generators each year. More than 400 people die each year in the U.S. from carbon monoxide poisoning, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

How can you protect your family and prevent this from happening to you, too? (NAME OF FIRE DEPARTMENT), CPSC and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommend the following:

* Never use a portable generator inside your home, garage, basement, crawlspace, shed or semi-enclosed area such as a porch. CO can seep into the house through open windows, doors or any type of vents.
* Use portable generators outside only, at least 20 feet from the house and away from windows, vents and other people’s homes too.
* Use outdoor-rated long extension cords to run power from the generator into your home.
* Install carbon monoxide alarms in your home, one on every level and outside each separate sleeping area. If you choose a plug-in type CO alarm, make sure that it also has battery backup. Test alarms monthly. Replace them if they fail to respond correctly when tested.
* If you start to feel sick, dizzy or weak while a portable generator is in use, get outside to fresh air right away. Then call 911. If you live in an area without access to 911, call your fire department.
* Never enter an enclosed or semi-enclosed area where a generator is or has been operating. Lethal levels of CO can still be present for several hours after a generator has stopped running.

**(NAME OF FIRE DEPARTMENT)** wants residents of **(CITY/TOWN)** to know that you cannot see or smell deadly CO. If you use a portable generator when the power goes out, make sure you use it safely.

**(YOUR NAME/TITLE)**