



United States  
**Consumer Product Safety Commission**

# Fatal Incidents Associated with Non-Fire Carbon Monoxide Poisoning from Engine-Driven Generators and Other Engine- Driven Tools, 2011–2021

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*This report was prepared by the CPSC staff.  
It has not been reviewed or approved by,  
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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	4
Introduction.....	7
I. Reported Numbers of Fatalities by Engine-Driven Tool (EDT) Product Type .....	9
Table 1: Number of Reported Fatal Non-Fire CO Exposure Incidents and Deaths Associated with Engine-Driven Tools, 2011–2021.....	11
Table 2: Number of Reported Fatal Non-Fire CO Exposure Incidents and Deaths Associated with Engine-Driven Tools by Number of Deaths per Incident, 2011–2021 .....	12
Table 3: Number of Reported Fatal Non-Fire CO Exposure Incidents and Deaths Associated with Engine-Driven Tools by Year, 2011–2021.....	13
II. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Victims and EDT-Use Patterns 2011-2021 .....	14
Table 4: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Fatalities Associated with Engine-Driven Tools by Age of Victim, 2011–2021 .....	14
Table 5: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Fatalities Associated with Engine-Driven Tools by Gender of Victim, 2011–2021 .....	15
Table 6: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Fatalities Associated with Engine-Driven Tools by Race/Ethnicity of Victim, 2011–2021 .....	16
Table 7: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Incidents and Fatalities Associated with Engine-Driven Tools by Season, 2011–2021 .....	17
Table 8: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Incidents and Fatalities Associated with Engine-Driven Tools by Victim Location, 2011–2021 .....	18
Table 9: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Fatalities Associated with Engine-Driven Tools by Population Density of Place of Death, 2011–2021.....	20
III. Alarm Usage 2011-2021 .....	21
Table 10: Carbon Monoxide Alarm Usage Associated with Engine-Driven Tools Non-Fire CO Poisoning Deaths, 2011–2021.....	21
IV. Hazard Patterns Associated with Generators 2011-2021.....	22
Table 11: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Fatalities for Incidents Associated with Generators <sup>1</sup> by Reason for Use, 2011–2021.....	23
Table 12: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Fatalities for Incidents Associated with Generators <sup>1</sup> by Reason for Power Outage, 2011–2021 .....	24
Table 13: Non-Fire CO Poisoning Deaths in the Fixed-Structure Home Location <sup>1</sup> by Location of the Generator, <sup>2</sup> 2011–2021 .....	26
Table 14: Non-Fire CO Fatalities in the Fixed-Structure Home <sup>1</sup> Reported to CPSC Staff and Associated with Generators <sup>2</sup> Categorized by Status of Ventilation, 2011–2021.....	27

<b>Table 15: Non-Fire CO Fatalities in the Fixed-Structure Home<sup>1</sup> Reported to CPSC Staff and Associated with Generators<sup>2</sup> Categorized by Size of Home, 2011–2021</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Conclusions</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>References</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>Appendix A: Epidemiology Data Retrieval Specifics</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>Appendix B: Engine Class of Generators Involved in Fatal CO Incidents</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Table B-1: Engine Class of Generators Involved in Fatal CO Incidents, 2011–2021</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>Appendix C: Fatal CO Exposure Incidents Where Generator Was Located Outside the Victim Location</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>Table C-1: Fatal CO Generator Incidents Where the Generator Was Located Outside of the Occupied Space, 2011–2021</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>Appendix D: Carboxyhemoglobin Levels Present in CO Fatalities</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>Table D-1: Carboxyhemoglobin Levels Associated with Engine-Driven Tools Non-Fire CO Poisoning Deaths, 2011–2021<sup>1</sup></b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>Appendix E: Historical Data</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>Figure 1: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Fatalities Associated with Engine-Driven Tools, 1999–2021</b> .....	<b>38</b>

# Executive Summary

This report summarizes fatal non-fire, carbon monoxide (CO) incidents associated with all engine-driven tools (EDTs), such as generators and other engine-driven tools (OEDTs) that occurred between 2011 and 2021, and were reported to U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) staff as of May 10, 2022. Due to incident reporting delays, statistics for the most recent years (2020 and 2021) should be considered incomplete. Because data collection is ongoing, the numbers for these years most likely will increase in future reports.

Throughout this report, the number of deaths represents a count of the fatalities associated with generators and OEDTs (which include power lawn mowers, garden tractors, portable pumps, power sprayers and washers, snow blowers, and concrete saws) that were reported to CPSC. The information on these fatalities is anecdotal and does not represent a complete set of all incidents that may have occurred during the relevant period. However, the information represents a minimum count for the number of CO-poisoning deaths associated with these products.

Additionally, included in this report are summaries of fatal, non-fire CO incidents, in which an EDT, and one or more other fuel-burning consumer products,<sup>1</sup> also may have been involved, and the EDT was believed to be, at least, a contributing factor to the fatal levels of CO. This report also provides a more detailed look at fatal, non-fire CO-poisoning incidents associated with EDTs, with particular emphasis on cases involving generator use, based on information found in the CPSC's In-Depth Investigation (INDP) File.

Some of the findings of this report are provided below:

## **CO Fatalities Associated with All EDTs and by EDT Product Type:**

- 900 fatalities from 710 incidents during 2011-2021;
  - 770 fatalities (86%) from 588 incidents associated with generators *only*;
  - 85 fatalities (9%) from 85 incidents involved OEDTs *only*; and
  - 45 fatalities (5%) from 37 incidents involved *multiple* fuel-burning consumer products, in which one product was either a generator or an OEDT and the other product was a non-EDT.
    - In all incidents involving multiple consumer products, the second product involved was heating equipment (portable liquid propane- or kerosene- fueled, or an electric heater being powered by a generator), or a cooking product;
- 52 fatalities from 39 separate incidents in 2021 as of the reporting deadline; all 39 incidents involved portable generators only.

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<sup>1</sup> Combustion consumer products produce heat or energy by burning a fuel source. All fuel-burning consumer products may produce gases that contain CO, because CO is a by-product of incomplete combustion.

- Compared to the 2021 report, this report presents
  - 52 additional fatalities in 2020;
  - 7 additional fatalities in 2019; and
  - 1 additional fatality in 2018.

### **Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Victims and EDT-Use Patterns (2011-2021):**

- Age: 87 percent of portable generator-related decedents and all 100 percent of OEDT-related decedents were 25 years old or older.
- Gender: More than 77 percent of portable generator-related decedents and 99 percent of the OEDT-related decedents were males.
- Race/Ethnicity: 23 percent of portable generator-related decedents were non-Hispanic Black or African Americans, which is much higher than their share in the U.S. population. Non-Hispanic White Americans constituted 87 percent of OEDT-related decedents, which is also much higher than their share in the U.S. population.
- Seasonal effects: 43 percent of fatalities from EDTs happen during the four colder months of the year (November through February); 32 percent during the transition months (March, April, September and October); and 24 percent in the warmer months.
- Structure type: 70 percent of all EDT-related fatalities occurred in fixed-structure homes.
- Urban versus rural: 56 percent of all EDT-related fatalities occurred in urban areas, and 15 percent occurred in small, rural, and isolated areas, a much greater proportion of the U.S. population than the population of individuals who live in rural and isolated areas.

### **CO Alarm Usage (2011-2021):**

- A CO alarm: Only 40 (17%) of the EDT-related fatalities were known to have alarms present.
  - For 18 of the deaths, the alarm was inoperable, due to no batteries, batteries inserted incorrectly, possibly drained batteries, no electric current, or the alarm did not sound for some unknown reason.
  - For 13 of the deaths, the alarm sounded, but the signal was misunderstood, the alarm was subsequently disarmed, or the alarm sounded inside the house, while the fatality occurred inside an attached garage.
  - For 5 deaths, we do not know if the alarm sounded during the event.

### **Hazard Patterns Associated with Generators (2011-2021):**

- The three most common reasons for using generators among reported incidents are power outages, power shut-offs, and attempts to provide power to temporary locations, such as cabins, campers, and trailers.
  - Power outages: 114 incidents with 157 fatalities. Mostly for weather-related issues, such as ice/snow storms and hurricanes/tropical storms.
  - Power shut-offs: 100 incidents involving 139 fatalities.

- Power to temporary locations: 108 incidents with 138 fatalities.
- The most common locations with generator-related fatalities were residential locations, accounting for 81 percent of the generator-related CO fatalities.
  - Fixed-structure homes: 581 non-fire CO fatalities (430 incidents). The incidents involved a generator or a generator in use with another potential CO-generating consumer product, mostly placed inside the living area of the home.
    - In 68 percent of these fatalities (where information was available), no apparent ventilation of the generator exhaust was attempted.
    - A majority of the incidents (where information was available) occurred in houses less than 1,500 square feet in size.
- Generator located outside victim location: In 7 percent of the fatalities (see Appendix C), the associated generator was outdoors, situated too close to windows, air conditioners, or other locations, which allowed CO to infiltrate an enclosed space; or the generator was placed outside of the victims' location, but within an enclosed space, like outside an apartment in the building's hallway, or outside a travel trailer, inside a garage, in which it was parked. In two cases, the victim was outside, too close to the running generator and did not survive. Of special note is a 3-person fatality incident that involved a CO shutoff-equipped generator that was advertised as certified to the voluntary standard *ANSI/PGMA G300-2018, Safety and Performance of Portable Generators*.

**Engine Class of Generators Involved in Fatal CO Incidents (2011-2021):**

- Of the 624 fatal generator incidents between 2011 and 2021 (including the generator plus non-EDT category), the generator engine class could only be determined in 257 cases. Ninety-five percent of the 257 incidents involved a portable generator with a Class I engine (94 incidents) or Class II, Single-Cylinder engine (149 incidents). (See Appendix B for engine class definition.)

**Carboxyhemoglobin Levels in CO Fatality Victims (2011-2021):**

- Of the CO fatalities associated with EDTs, 83 percent had carboxyhemoglobin (COHb) levels at or above the 50 percent level, when the COHb level was known.<sup>2</sup>

*Note: Throughout this report, the years 2020 and 2021 are italicized in table headings, indicating that incident and death counts are likely to change as additional information is received. Incident and death counts may change for other years, as well, but to a much smaller extent.*

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<sup>2</sup> As levels rise above 40 percent COHb, death is possible in healthy individuals, and it becomes increasingly likely with prolonged exposures that maintain levels in the 40 percent to 60 percent range.

## Introduction

CPSC staff searched the Consumer Product Safety Commission Risk Management System (CPSRMS) databases to prepare the statistics recorded in this report. See Appendix A for the codes and keywords used in the database searches. The data records were combined and collated to develop the most complete set of records possible in a single database. At this stage, staff reviewed each record to determine whether the incident was in-scope for this report and to correct any discrepancies in information from the different sources (See Appendix A for the specifics of scope determination). It should be noted that reporting may not be complete, and this report reflects only incidents reported and entered into CPSC databases on or before May 10, 2022. Staff included all fatal, unintentional, non-fire carbon monoxide (CO) incidents associated with engine-driven tools (EDTs) found during the database search that were determined to be in-scope incidents.

CPSC records contain information on 900 non-fire CO fatalities associated with EDTs during the years 2011 through 2021. Last year's report, dated June 2021, contained summary information and analyses for the 11-year period 2010–2020. In addition to dropping year 2010 from the reporting period, this updated report added information on 112 CO fatalities associated with engine-driven tools, and the report removed 1 fatality.

Changes to previous report:

- 2018 – 1 new incident added, accounting for 1 death.
- 2019 – 6 new incidents added, accounting for 7 deaths.
- 2020 – 45 new incidents added, accounting for 52 deaths.
- 2021 – 39 new incidents added, accounting for 52 deaths.

Incidents associated with generators that were specifically reported as integral parts of recreational vehicles (RVs), motor homes, or boats may not be within the jurisdiction of the CPSC. Thus, these incidents were considered out of scope and were not included. For example, generators that were reportedly mounted to an RV were not included; nor were boat generators that were installed by the boat manufacturer. Because incidents in recreational vehicles and boats can be associated with a portable generator or an integral generator, those incidents in which the type of generator could not be determined were also excluded from the analysis. Any incident that was reported to be other than unintentional in nature was considered to be out of scope and was also excluded from the analysis, as were work-related incidents, which may not be within the jurisdiction of the CPSC.

This report is divided into four sections:

- I. Reported Numbers of Fatalities by EDT Product Type. This presents an overall picture of CO fatalities associated with engine-driven tools.

- II. Socio-Demographics of Victims and EDT Use Patterns. This presents various socio-demographic summaries focused on identifying specific characteristics of CO fatality victims and usage patterns, such as when and where fatalities occurred.
- III. Alarm Usage. This presents information on CO alarm usage during fatal CO events.
- IV. Hazard Patterns Associated with Generators. This presents data specific to generator usage patterns that may lead to fatal CO poisoning events.

Additionally, there are five appendices:

- Appendix A presents the database search criteria;
- Appendix B presents the generator-size class distribution involved in the fatal CO incidents;
- Appendix C presents a summary of fatal CO incidents that occurred with the generator located in outdoor locations;
- Appendix D presents summary findings on carboxyhemoglobin (COHb) levels in the blood of victims of CO poisoning involving EDT use, which are helpful in assessing the hazard presented by the product and the speed of onset of harm; and
- Appendix E graphically presents the year-by-year summary of CO fatalities broken out separately by generators and OEDTs for the years 1999 through 2021.



# I. Reported Numbers of Fatalities by Engine-Driven Tool (EDT) Product Type

Table 1 presents the reported fatal incidents and the number of deaths in 2020 through 2021, along with a revised summary of CO incidents and fatalities associated with engine-driven tools from 2011 through 2021. The table records the number of incidents and deaths by the broad categories of “Generators,” “OEDT,” and “Multiple Products.” Within each broad category, the frequency of reports is summarized by product type. Staff is aware of 710 incidents involving EDTs, with a total of 900 deaths due to non-fire CO exposure that occurred between 2011 and 2021. For 2021 alone, as of May 10, 2022, 39 fatal, non-fire CO exposure incidents involving EDTs were reported to have occurred between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021. Fifty-two deaths occurred in these 39 fatality CO incidents.

Multiple product incidents are fatal CO poisonings that involved several fuel-burning consumer products of different types that generate CO, with at least one product an EDT, or investigating authorities could not determine which of the multiple consumer products in use was the source of the CO. By this definition, incidents involving multiple products of the same type, (e.g., 2 lawn mowers) were not classified as “Multiple Products.” Incidents in which multiple CO-producing products were involved, where at least one of the sources of CO may not be under the CPSC’s jurisdiction, such as automobiles, boats, or recreational vehicles, were determined to be out of scope, and they are not included in this report. Thus, this report may underestimate the incidents of CO fatalities. For the rest of the report after Table 1, “Multiple Products” incidents will be included in the summary for the involved engine-driven tool type, either “Generators” or OEDTs. CPSC staff is aware of 45 fatalities associated with multiple consumer products occurring in the period 2011 through 2021.

In Table 1, the product type, “welder,” appears in both the “Generator” and OEDT categories. Some welding equipment is designed to be used as a welder or as an electric generator. Three of the five fatal, non-fire CO incidents were associated with the use of welding equipment as a generator to provide power to a location. In 2020, one such incident killed four individuals. The remaining two fatal, non-fire CO incidents (two fatalities) involved the use of welding equipment, but did not specifically identify the welder as a generator.

All 45 non-fire CO fatalities in the “Multiple Products” category for 2011–2021 involved a heating- or cooking-related consumer product other than an EDT. All cooking-related consumer products appear to have been in use as a makeshift heating product. All but one of these incidents involved another fuel-burning product. The one exception was a case where the victim appeared to be working on his lawnmower in a garage and used a generator to power electric heaters. In this case, there is evidence that the lawnmower was

also running, therefore, this is categorized as a Multiple Products incident where one of the products was used for heating (in this case, the generator).

In addition, during 2011-2021, there was a fatal incident in which two generators and an LP heater were in use; this incident is included as a generator- and heater-associated fatality in Table 1. In addition, among eight fatal incidents (nine deaths) that may have involved more than one generator (either known by officials to be in use or identified by officials as possibly in use), one incident may have included the possible use of three generators.

**Table 1: Number of Reported Fatal Non-Fire CO Exposure Incidents and Deaths Associated with Engine-Driven Tools, 2011–2021**

Product	2019		2020		2021		Total: 2011–2021	
	Number of Incidents	Number of Deaths	Number of Incidents	Number of Deaths	Number of Incidents	Number of Deaths	Number of Incidents	Number of Deaths
<b>Total Engine-Driven Tools</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>900</b>
<b>Generators</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>770</b>
Generator, portable	75	90	68	90	39	52	581	758
Generator, fixed location	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	6
Welder (used as a generator) <sup>1</sup>	0	0	1	4	0	0	3	6
<b>Other Engine-Driven Tools (OEDT)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>85</b>
Lawn mowers	3	3	4	4	0	0	43	43
Riding lawn mower/Garden tractor	0	0	3	3	0	0	30	30
Powered push lawn mower	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Powered lawn mower, unspecified type	3	3	1	1	0	0	12	12
Snow blower	1	1	1	1	0	0	9	9
Power washer/sprayer	3	3	0	0	0	0	12	12
All-terrain vehicle	1	1	0	0	0	0	5	5
Welder (used as welder or other reason) <sup>1</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Water pump / Sump pump	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	3
Concrete saw	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Wood Splitter	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Paint sprayer	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Edger	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Stump Grinder	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Leaf Blower	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Antique Tractor	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Unspecified Gas Power Equipment	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2
<b>Multiple Products<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>45</b>
Generator + Other Consumer Product	4	5	8	9	0	0	36	44
OEDT + Other Consumer Product <sup>3</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

1 Some welding equipment is designed to be used as a welder or a generator.

2 “Multiple Products” includes incidents involving generators or OEDTs with other combustion fuel-burning consumer products. “Other Consumer Products” includes one or more of the following: portable LP-fueled heaters, portable kerosene-fueled heaters, camp stoves, lanterns, outdoor cookers, furnaces, and wood stoves.

3 The one incident associated with an OEDT and another consumer product included a gasoline-fueled lawn mowers and an LP grill used in an effort to keep warm.

Note: Italicized numbers indicate that reporting of incidents is ongoing. Counts may change in subsequent reports.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

Five hundred and eighty-eight of the 710 incidents (83%) reported to CPSC staff during the 2011–2021 period were associated with a generator alone, and the incidents accounted for 770 of the 900 CO deaths (86%). Additionally, 44 other CO fatalities from 36 incidents were associated with the use of a generator and another combustion consumer product—most commonly an LP- or kerosene-fueled heater. In addition, because the majority of incidents were associated with generators, characteristics of these incidents are reported separately in Section IV. Slightly more than half of the OEDT CO incidents (51%, 43 of 85) involved a garden tractor or other powered lawn mower (including the single “Multiple Products” incident involving an OEDT). Deaths associated with powered lawn mowers were often associated with an individual repairing or otherwise working on the product in an enclosed space. Additionally, there was one fatal incident in which a consumer was apparently repairing an antique tractor in his garage. Due to the relatively small number of non-generator, engine-driven tool CO fatalities, throughout the remainder of this report, these incidents will simply be reported as “OEDT-related.”

CPSC staff examined the number of deaths associated with each fatal incident (Table 2). Of the 710 fatal incidents, 80 percent involved a single fatality. Seventy-seven percent (485 of 624) of the fatal generator-related incidents involved a single fatality. One incident in 2015, which involved a generator, resulted in the deaths of eight people (a father and his seven children). In 2016, another incident resulted in six deaths. This incident involved an LP-fueled generator. Of the 86 fatal incidents in the OEDTs category, all the incidents resulted in no more than one fatality.

**Table 2: Number of Reported Fatal Non-Fire CO Exposure Incidents and Deaths Associated with Engine-Driven Tools by Number of Deaths per Incident, 2011–2022**

Number of Deaths Reported per Incident <sup>1</sup>	All Engine-Driven Tools (EDTs) Incidents		Generator Incidents		Other Engine-Driven Tools (OEDTs) Incidents	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
	<b>710</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100%</b>
1	571	80%	485	78%	86	100%
2	111	16%	111	18%	0	0%
3	13	2%	13	2%	0	0%
4	11	2%	11	2%	0	0%
5	2	< 1%	2	< 1%	0	0%
6	1	< 1%	1	< 1%	0	0%
7	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
8	1	< 1%	1	< 1%	0	0%

Notes: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Italicized numbers indicate that reporting of incidents is ongoing. Counts may change in subsequent reports.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

CPSC staff summarized the number of reported deaths associated with EDTs by year of death (Table 3). It should be noted that the values in Table 3 represent the number of

deaths reported to CPSC staff as of May 10, 2022. Some deaths are reported to CPSC staff shortly after an incident occurs, while other deaths are reported to CPSC staff months, or even years, after an incident occurs. Therefore, counts for more recent years may not be as complete as counts for earlier years and may change in the future. Since 2011, prior year counts have increased by an average of 45 percent in the following year's report and by an additional average of 7 percent 2 years later. Over the last 3 years, the rate has been even higher, at about a 74 percent increase in the latest year, when compared to the prior year's report. This may be due to delays in reporting caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The average number of non-fire CO fatalities associated with both generators and OEDTs for years 2017 through 2019, is also presented in Table 3. Although slight changes are still possible in the future, these 3 years represent the most recent years for which CPSC staff believes reporting is substantially complete. Figure 1 in Appendix D illustrates the historical trend in EDT-related, non-fire CO fatalities since 1999.

**Table 3: Number of Reported Fatal Non-Fire CO Exposure Incidents and Deaths Associated with Engine-Driven Tools by Year, 2011–2021**

Year	All Engine-Driven Tools (EDTs)		Generators		Other Engine-Driven Tools (OEDTs)	
	Incidents	Deaths	Incidents	Deaths	Incidents	Deaths
<b>Total</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>86</b>
2011	81	108	69	96	12	12
2012	48	54	43	49	5	5
2013	56	69	46	59	10	10
2014	45	56	38	49	7	7
2015	59	84	52	77	7	7
2016	67	85	57	75	10	10
2017	75	91	67	83	8	8
2018	69	88	57	76	12	12
2019	89	105	79	95	10	10
2020	82	108	77	103	5	5
2021	39	52	39	52	0	0
<b>Average: 2017–2019</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

Notes: Detail averages may not sum to total average due to rounding.

Italicized numbers indicate that reporting of incidents is ongoing. Counts may change in subsequent reports.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

## II. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Victims and EDT-Use Patterns 2011-2021

This section presents socio-demographic information about the victims of reported fatal CO incidents associated with EDTs. Tables 4, 5, and 6 summarize socio-demographic characteristics of the victims. Table 4 presents the distribution of ages of the victims.

According to the U.S. Census's 2018 5-Year Estimated U.S. Resident Population figures (the approximate mid-point range of this data summary), approximately 68 percent of the U.S. population is over the age of 24 years. In comparison, 88 percent (744 of 900) of reported non-fire, CO poisoning decedents associated with all EDTs, 87 percent (708 of 814) of decedents associated with generators, and all of the 86 decedents associated with OEDTs, were 25 years or older. In fact, 83 percent of the non-fire CO fatalities associated with OEDTs (70 of 86) involved victims age 45 or older.

It appears from the data summary that all EDT-related CO fatalities have involved older consumers at a higher rate than younger consumers, relative to their respective proportion in the general U.S. population. Specifically, 60 percent of the CO fatalities were to victims over the age of 44, while only 41 percent of the U.S. population was above 44 years of age during this period. By contrast, only 12 percent of EDT-related victims were below the age of 25, while 32 percent of the U.S. population was below 25 years of age during this period.

**Table 4: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Fatalities Associated with Engine-Driven Tools by Age of Victim, 2011–2021**

Age	2018 5-Year Estimated U.S. Resident Population <sup>1</sup>	All Engine-Driven Tools (EDTs)		Generators		Other Engine-Driven Tools (OEDTs)	
		Deaths	Percentage	Deaths	Percentage	Deaths	Percentage
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100%</b>
Under 5	6%	7	1%	7	1%	0	0%
5–14	13%	35	4%	35	4%	0	0%
15–24	13%	62	7%	62	8%	0	0%
25–44	26%	259	29%	244	30%	15	17%
45–64	26%	357	40%	327	40%	30	35%
65 and over	15%	178	20%	137	17%	40	47%

<sup>1</sup>This percentage represents the 2014-2018 Census-estimated percentage of the U.S. population, an approximate mid-point range of the 11-year range.

Note: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Sources: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

5-Year Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States and States: January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2018.

Table 5 presents the distribution of the gender of the victims. Male victims accounted for 79 percent of the deaths associated with all EDTs. Male victims comprised 77 percent of the deaths associated with generators and 99 percent of OEDT fatalities.

**Table 5: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Fatalities Associated with Engine-Driven Tools by Gender of Victim, 2011–2021**

Gender	2018 5-Year Estimated U.S. Resident Population <sup>1</sup>	All Engine-Driven Tools (EDTs)		Generators		All Other Engine-Driven Tools (OEDTs)	
		Deaths	Percentage	Deaths	Percentage	Deaths	Percentage
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100%</b>
Male	49%	709	79%	624	77%	85	99%
Female	51%	191	21%	190	23%	1	1%

Notes:

<sup>1</sup>This percentage represents the 2014-2018 Census-estimated percentage of the U.S. population, an approximate mid-point range of the 11-year range.

Notes: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Sources: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

5-Year Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States and States: January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2018.

Table 6 summarizes the race/ethnicity of the reported CO fatalities associated with EDTs. The percentage of all EDT-related CO fatalities identified as non-Hispanic “Black/African American” (21% of deaths) was a much higher proportion classified than those classified by the U.S. Census Bureau as non-Hispanic “Black/African Americans” in the U.S. population (an estimated 12%). For generators, the percentage of non-Hispanic Black/African Americans victims is even higher at 23%, nearly double of the resident population. The percentage of the OEDT-related CO fatalities identified as non-Hispanic “White” (87% of deaths) was also much higher than the proportion classified as non-Hispanic “White” by of the U.S. Census Bureau (an estimated 61% of the U.S. population). It should be noted that race/ethnicity determinations are based on available information. Many of the race/ethnicity determinations are based on death certificate data. However, some states do not provide this information on the death certificate and, barring other available information, these individuals were designated as “Unknown”. Additionally, some individuals were identified as “mixed” or “multiple” as a race/ethnicity designation. And finally, some individuals were simply designated as “Other”. Individuals falling into these three designations were combined into the “Other/Multi/Unknown” category.

**Table 6: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Fatalities Associated with Engine-Driven Tools by Race/Ethnicity of Victim, 2011–2021**

Race / Ethnicity	2018 5-Year Estimated U.S. Resident Population <sup>1</sup>	All Engine-Driven Tools (EDTs)		Generators		All Other Engine-Driven Tools (OEDTs)	
		Deaths	Percentage	Deaths	Percentage	Deaths	Percentage
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100%</b>
White <sup>2</sup>	61%	533	59%	458	56%	75	87%
Black/African American <sup>2</sup>	12%	189	21%	186	23%	3	3%
Hispanic (any race)	18%	105	12%	103	13%	2	2%
Asian <sup>2</sup>	5%	15	2%	15	2%	0	0%
Native American <sup>2,3</sup>	1%	11	1%	11	1%	0	0%
Other/Multi/Unknown <sup>4</sup>	3%	47	5%	41	5%	6	7%

1 This percentage represents the 2014-2018 Census-estimated percentage of the U.S. population, an approximate mid-point range of the 11-year range.

2 These Race/Ethnicity designations are for single race only.

3 Includes American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander.

4 Includes Other races, multiple Races, and those where the race of the victims are unknown.

Notes: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Sources: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

5-Year Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States and States: January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2018.

Staff examined reported deaths associated with EDTs by the time of year that the incident occurred (Table 7). The non-fire CO fatalities were classified into one of three categories, depending on the month in which the incident occurred: cold months, warm months, and transitional months. “Cold months” are November, December, January, and February; “warm months” are May, June, July, and August; and “transitional months” are March, April, September, and October.

Through the 11 years covered by this report, non-fire CO deaths associated with EDTs have tended to occur more often in the four colder months of the year (November through February) than in others. Forty-five percent of the incidents (43% of fatalities) of the non-fire CO deaths associated with EDTs occurred in these months. Many of the fatalities can be directly associated with the use of generators during power outages because of weather conditions, such as ice or snow storms. Thirty-two percent of the EDT-related CO deaths occurred in the transitional months. A large portion of the non-fire CO fatalities in the transitional months can be directly associated with the use of generators during power outages because of hurricanes and tropical storms, many occurring in September, and to a lesser extent, in October. Additional details on this issue are presented in Section IV of this report.



**Table 7: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Incidents and Fatalities Associated with Engine-Driven Tools by Season, 2011–2021**

Season Incident Occurred		All Engine-Driven Tools (EDTs)		Generators		Other Engine-Driven Tools (OEDTs)	
Total	Incidents	710	100%	624	100%	86	100%
	Deaths	900	100%	814	100%	86	100%
Cold months	Incidents	321	45%	285	46%	36	42%
	Deaths	391	43%	355	44%	36	42%
Transitional months	Incidents	226	32%	198	32%	28	33%
	Deaths	292	32%	264	32%	28	33%
Warm months	Incidents	163	23%	141	23%	22	26%
	Deaths	217	24%	195	24%	22	26%

Notes: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

Incidents involving deaths are described further in Table 8 by the location where the death occurred. The majority of non-fire, CO poisoning deaths associated with EDTs (743 of 900, or 83%) were reported to have occurred at residential locations, which include fixed-structure homes, apartments, detached structures located at a residence, like detached garages and sheds, and residential locations in non-traditional structures, like camper trailers and RVs used as a primary residence. Seventy percent of the deaths occurred at fixed-structures used as a residence, which includes houses, mobile homes, apartments, townhouses, and structures attached to the house, such as an attached garage. Another 10 percent occurred in external or detached structures at home locations, such as detached garages or sheds. A larger portion of these external structure fatalities were related to OEDTs, such as lawnmowers running in sheds or detached garages. For example, 41 percent of OEDT-related fatalities occurred in external structures at home locations, while only 7 percent of generator-deaths occurred there.

Three percent of deaths associated with engine-driven tools occurred in nontraditional homes, such as travel trailers, houseboats, or storage sheds being used as permanent residences. The “Temporary shelter” category includes incidents in which victims died from CO poisoning from portable generators or other EDTs, while the victims were temporarily occupying or otherwise using trailers, horse trailers, RVs, cabins (used as a temporary shelter), tents, or campers. Incidents that involved built-in generators at temporary shelters, or generators built specifically for use in an RV, may not be within the CPSC’s jurisdiction, and as such, have been excluded from the analyses. However, one fatality that involved a portable generator retrofitted into an RV generator compartment was included because it involved what was originally a portable generator.

The “Boat/Vehicle” category only includes incidents in which an EDT was not an integral part of the boat/vehicle (such as a van), but was brought onto the boat/vehicle. As with

temporary shelters, incidents involving generators that were built in, or specifically designed for a boat, may not be within the CPSC’s jurisdiction; and therefore, they are not included in this report. Two fatalities resulting from an incident on a boat, where the consumers connected a portable generator inside the engine compartment of the boat, were included because the generator was a portable generator that was retrofitted for use on the boat.

The “Other” category includes incidents that occurred in locations such as office buildings, utility buildings, and storage sheds (offsite from home).

**Table 8: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Incidents and Fatalities Associated with Engine-Driven Tools by Victim Location, 2011–2021**

Victim Location		All Engine-Driven Tools (EDTs)		Generators		Other Engine-Driven Tools (OEDTs)	
Total	Incidents	710	100%	624	100%	86	100%
	Deaths	900	100%	814	100%	86	100%
Home, fixed Structure <sup>1</sup>	Incidents	476	67%	430	69%	46	53%
	Deaths	627	70%	581	71%	46	53%
Home, detached Structure <sup>2</sup>	Incidents	87	12%	52	8%	35	41%
	Deaths	88	10%	53	7%	35	41%
Home, non-house <sup>3</sup>	Incidents	23	3%	23	4%	0	0%
	Deaths	28	3%	28	3%	0	0%
Temporary shelter	Incidents	41	6%	41	7%	0	0%
	Deaths	59	7%	59	7%	0	0%
Boat/Vehicle	Incidents	43	6%	43	7%	0	0%
	Deaths	50	6%	50	6%	0	0%
Other	Incidents	33	5%	28	4%	5	6%
	Deaths	41	5%	36	4%	5	6%
Outdoors	Incidents	3	< 1%	3	< 1%	0	0%
	Deaths	3	< 1%	3	< 1%	0	0%
Not reported	Incidents	4	1%	4	1%	0	0%
	Deaths	4	< 1%	4	< 1%	0	0%

1 This refers to a fixed-structure used as a residence, including: houses, mobile homes, apartments, townhouses, and structures attached to the house, such as attached garages.

2 This refers to detached structures at home locations, including detached garages and sheds.

3 This refers to non-fixed location residences, including travel trailers and houseboats.

Notes: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

Table 9 presents the number of non-fire, CO poisoning deaths reported to CPSC staff that were associated with EDTs, categorized by the population density of the place of death. All fatal incidents were assigned to one of four rural/urban categories, based on the Rural-

Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) codes developed by the Economic Research Service (ERS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The four categories are “Urban Core,” “Sub-Urban,” “Large Rural,” and “Small Rural/Isolated.” Details on the process of determining population density or rurality can be found at the USDA website at: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/rural-urban-commuting-area-codes.aspx>. Additional information regarding the cross-referencing of zip codes to RUCA codes can be obtained from the University of Washington, WWAMI<sup>3</sup> Rural Health Research Center website at: <http://depts.washington.edu/uwruca/>. This study is updated approximately once every 10 years, the last update occurring in 2010; but revisions were made on July 3, 2019, to correct a programming error affecting the 2010 secondary RUCA codes.

Fifty-six percent (505 of 900) of CO fatalities associated with the use of EDTs reported to CPSC staff occurred in urban areas, while the estimated proportion of the U.S. population living in urban core areas is 71 percent. The remaining 44 percent (395 of 900) of CO fatalities occurred in non-urban core areas (sub-urban, large rural, and small rural/isolated areas), where an estimated 29 percent of the U.S. population lives. The proportions of fatalities for each of the lower density locations exceeds each of proportions of the U.S. population who live in these locations.

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<sup>3</sup> The WWAMI name is derived from the first letter of each of the five cooperating states in a partnership between the University of Washington School of Medicine and the states of Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho.

**Table 9: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Fatalities Associated with Engine-Driven Tools by Population Density of Place of Death, 2011–2021**

Population Density		Estimated Percentage of U.S. Population <sup>1</sup>	All Engine-Driven Tools (EDTs)		Generators		Other Engine-Driven Tools (OEDTs)	
Total	Incidents	100%	710	100%	624	100%	86	100%
	Deaths		900	100%	814	100%	86	100%
Urban Core	Incidents	71%	394	55%	355	57%	39	45%
	Deaths		505	56%	466	57%	39	45%
Sub-Urban	Incidents	10%	105	15%	83	13%	22	26%
	Deaths		137	15%	115	14%	22	26%
Large Rural	Incidents	10%	93	13%	80	13%	13	15%
	Deaths		112	12%	99	12%	13	15%
Small Rural /Isolated	Incidents	9%	113	16%	101	16%	12	14%
	Deaths		139	15%	127	16%	12	14%
Unknown	Incidents	-	5	1%	5	1%	0	-
	Deaths		7	1%	7	1%	0	-

<sup>1</sup> Percentages are determined from the estimated 2010 U.S. population categorized by RUCA designation. U.S. population estimates by RUCA classification were determined by cross-referencing the WWAMI RUCA zip code table with the 2010 U.S. Census population estimates by zip code area, the most current census data available by zip code area. USDA updates the RUCA tables once every 10 years. The tables for the year 2010 are the most up-to-date. These tables were modified in 2019 to correct a programming error.

Notes: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, 2019.

WWAMI Rural Research Center at the University of Washington Economic Research Group, USDA.

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011.

### III. Alarm Usage 2011-2021

Table 10 presents a summary of CO fatalities characterized by CO alarm usage and alarm status. In 77 percent of the fatal incidents (549 of 710), and 74 percent of reported CO poisoning deaths (664 of 900), the presence of a CO alarm at the location of the incident was unknown or unreported. Of the 159 fatal incidents (234 CO fatalities) associated with EDTs, in which it was known whether a CO alarm was present, a CO alarm was present in only 28 incidents (18%) involving 40 CO fatalities. Of these 28 fatal incidents, the alarm was known to have sounded a warning in only 11 cases (13 fatalities). In most cases, it was either unknown if the alarm sounded before the victims were incapacitated or if they ignored it. Also, there are cases where the alarm sounded inside the house with the victim located in the garage. In these cases, it is most likely that the victims were incapacitated prior to the CO seeping into the house to a level that would trigger the alarm.

**Table 10: Carbon Monoxide Alarm Usage Associated with Engine-Driven Tools Non-Fire CO Poisoning Deaths, 2011–2021**

CO Alarm Status	Number of Deaths and Percentage of Deaths when Alarm Status was Known								
	All Engine-Driven Tools (EDTs)			Generators			Other Engine-Driven Tools (OEDTs)		
	Incidents	Deaths	% of Deaths	Incidents	Deaths	% of Deaths	Incidents	Deaths	% of Deaths
<b>Total</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Alarm Status Known</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>No Alarm</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Alarm Present</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>43%</b>
Alarmed	11	13	6%	7	9	4%	4	4	29%
Did not alarm, batteries removed, incorrectly inserted or drained	9	18	8%	9	18	8%	0	0	0%
Did not alarm, plug-in type, no power	2	3	1%	2	3	1%	0	0	0%
Alarm present, Unknown if it Alarmed	5	5	2%	3	3	1%	2	2	14%
Did not alarm, Unknown reason	1	1	< 1%	1	1	< 1%	0	0	0%
<b>Not applicable, victim outdoors</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Alarm Status Unknown</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>-</b>

Notes: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

## IV. Hazard Patterns Associated with Generators 2011-2021

This section presents information about the usage patterns associated with fatal CO poisonings specific to generators, as well as information about the homes in which fatal generator incidents occurred. As of May 10, 2022, CPSC staff is aware of 624 generator-related incidents from 2011 through 2021, which resulted in non-fire CO fatalities. Thirty-six of these incidents may have also involved a second fuel-burning device that may have contributed to the CO poisonings. Staff completed, or otherwise resolved, in-depth investigations (IDIs) for 590 of 624 (95%) fatal CO incidents associated with generators that occurred from 2011 through 2021. For the remaining 34 incidents in which staff did not perform an IDI, or did not complete an IDI by the cut-off date of May 10, 2022, attempts were made to augment the data from reports of the incidents from other sources, such as death certificates. Summaries of generator-related incidents in this section also include incidents in which multiple, fuel-burning consumer products were involved, including a generator.

A review of records for the 624 incidents resulting in 814 generator-related, non-fire CO deaths reported to CPSC staff suggests three primary reasons for using a generator. One reason for using a generator was to provide electricity to a location after a temporary situation (e.g., a power outage). A second reason was to provide power after a shutoff to the residence by the utility company, due to bill dispute or nonpayment. A third primary reason is to provide power to a temporary location, such as a camper or a cabin. Table 11 provides a breakdown, by year, listing the reasons why a generator was in use at the time of the incident. Eighteen percent of the incidents (19 percent of the reported deaths) involving generator-related, non-fire CO fatalities were associated with a temporary power outage stemming from a weather problem, or a problem with power distribution. Sixteen percent of the fatal incidents (17 percent of deaths) were associated with a power shutoff by the utility company for nonpayment or other reason. Additionally, 17 percent of incidents (17 percent of deaths) were associated with attempting to provide power to temporary locations, like storage sheds, trailers, boats, campers, cabins, and campsites. However, for 26 percent of the fatal incidents (24 percent of deaths), staff could not determine why the generator was in use, or why there was no electricity at the location of the incident.

Most of the generators associated with fatal CO poisoning were gasoline-fueled generators. In 111 of the 624 incidents, staff could not ascertain the fuel type. Of the 513 cases remaining cases, 99 percent (506 of 513) were gasoline-fueled generators. Seven additional incidents involved propane-fueled generators (three of which were stationary generators and another was a welder/generator), and one involved a diesel-fueled generator.

**Table 11: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Fatalities for Incidents Associated with Generators<sup>1</sup> by Reason for Use, 2011–2021**

Reason for Use		Total	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	Incidents	624	69	43	46	38	52	57	67	57	79	77	39
	Deaths	814	96	49	59	49	77	75	83	76	95	103	52
Power outage due to weather, or problem with power distribution	Incidents	114	19	15	12	5	4	4	16	5	8	15	11
	Deaths	157	27	16	13	5	6	11	21	6	9	26	17
Electricity turned off by power company due to bill dispute, nonpayment, or other reason <sup>2</sup>	Incidents	100	17	5	9	8	11	11	11	6	10	7	5
	Deaths	139	25	6	11	11	22	13	16	8	13	9	5
Provide power to temporary locations (storage shed, trailer, boat, camper, cabin, campsite, etc.)	Incidents	108	8	5	5	5	7	10	11	18	18	18	3
	Deaths	138	13	6	5	7	10	12	12	23	21	24	5
New home or homeowner, and power not yet turned on, home under construction or renovation	Incidents	63	5	3	6	5	5	8	5	6	9	6	5
	Deaths	86	10	4	11	5	8	9	5	8	13	6	7
Provide power to home or mobile home that normally does not have electricity	Incidents	58	4	4	2	5	4	1	10	5	8	9	6
	Deaths	74	4	6	2	8	6	1	14	6	9	12	6
Working on or preparing a home for predicted storm/ Periodic testing	Incidents	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Deaths	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Provide power to a shed or garage that normally does not have electricity	Incidents	8	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0
	Deaths	10	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	0
Other (previous fire in house, power shut off by owners, servicing power supply, or other usage)	Incidents	11	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	0	0	0
	Deaths	14	2	1	2	1	4	1	1	2	0	0	0
Unknown why electricity off	Incidents	160	13	9	10	9	16	21	13	13	25	22	9
	Deaths	194	13	9	13	12	20	27	14	19	29	26	12

1 Number of deaths associated with generators includes incidents where other consumer products may also have been involved. Other products include one or more of the following: lawn mowers, portable LP-fueled heaters, portable kerosene-fueled heaters, camp stoves, lanterns, outdoor cookers, furnaces, and wood stoves.

2 In one incident involving one death in 2021, the power was cut-off due to a hazardous electrical situation in the home. Italicized numbers indicate that reporting of incidents is ongoing. Counts may change in subsequent reports.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

For the 114 fatal incidents associated with a power outage due to weather or a problem with power distribution, Table 12 provides a breakdown by year and a cause of the power outage. Eighty-six percent of the fatal incidents associated with power outages were known to be due to specific weather conditions. Of the 98 incidents (comprising 140 fatalities) when the reason for the outage was known, hurricanes and tropical storms associated with 38 percent of weather-related CO fatal incidents but 41 percent of the deaths. Ice or snow storms were also associated with 38 percent of CO fatal incidents but only 34 percent of the deaths over the 11-year period from 2011 to 2021. Of the 58 known hurricane- or tropical storm-related fatalities between 2011 and 2021, the majority of deaths (64%, 37 deaths) occurred in the 2 years 2017 and 2020, combined.

**Table 12: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Fatalities for Incidents Associated with Generators<sup>1</sup> by Reason for Power Outage, 2011–2021**

Reason for Power Outage		Total	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	Incidents	114	19	15	12	5	4	4	16	5	8	15	11
	Deaths	157	27	16	13	5	6	11	21	6	9	26	17
Ice or snow storm <sup>2</sup>	Incidents	37	10	5	8	1	3	1	0	0	2	2	5
	Deaths	47	14	5	8	1	4	2	0	0	2	2	9
Hurricane or tropical storm	Incidents	37	3	7	0	0	0	1	13	2	1	9	1
	Deaths	58	5	8	0	0	0	1	17	3	1	20	3
Wind storm	Incidents	6	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
	Deaths	13	1	1	0	1	2	6	2	0	0	0	0
Thunderstorm, rainstorm, or flooding	Incidents	6	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
	Deaths	8	3	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	1
Tornado	Incidents	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Deaths	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Storm, unspecified	Incidents	11	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	3	0	1
	Deaths	12	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	4	0	1
Unknown or other reason for outage	Incidents	16	1	0	3	1	0	0	1	1	2	4	3
	Deaths	17	1	0	4	1	0	0	1	1	2	4	3

1 Number of deaths associated with generators includes incidents where other consumer products may also have been involved. Other products include one or more of the following: lawn mowers, portable LP-fueled heaters, portable kerosene-fueled heaters, camp stoves, lanterns, outdoor cookers, furnaces, and wood stoves.

2 This category includes a 2019 incident with flooding during an ice storm. The incident was included here because the victim was attempting to run a gas-powered sump pump to clear water from his house.

Note: Italicized numbers indicate that reporting of incidents is ongoing. Counts may change in subsequent reports.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.



As shown in Table 8, 581 generator-related, non-fire CO fatalities occurred in a fixed-structure home. The category, “fixed-structure home,” is defined as a permanent, fixed-structure used as a residence, including: houses, mobile homes, apartments, townhouses, and structures attached to the house, such as an attached garage. Travel trailers, campers, and RVs are not included in this classification; nor are external structures at the home, such as detached garages or sheds.

Of these 581 generator-related deaths that occurred in a fixed-structure home, information was available for 464 deaths (80%) regarding the victim’s location in relation to the generator. One hundred and eleven of these 464 fatalities (24%) occurred in the same room or space as the generator.

The 581 deaths that occurred in a fixed-structure home resulted from 430 incidents (Table 13). These incidents were further classified by the specific location of the generator within the home. The category, “Living Space (non-basement),” includes rooms reported as bedrooms, dens, living rooms, landings, home offices, rear rooms, enclosed porches, and converted garages. This category does not include attached garages or basements; nor does it include transitory locations where consumers are not expected to spend a lot of time, such as laundry rooms, utility rooms, or bathrooms. The category, “Outside the home,” includes incidents in which the generator was placed outside a home, but near an open window, door, or vent of the home. Seventy-four percent (429 of 581) of the CO fatalities at fixed-home locations occurred when a generator was known to be placed inside the home, including the living space (226), a basement/crawlspace (118), in a transitory place (Closet/laundry room/utility room/hallway) (24), or inside the house, with no additional information provided (61). Another 18 percent of the fatalities (103 of 581) occurred when the generator was placed in an attached garage, enclosed carport, or attached barn.

Twenty-eight deaths from 16 incidents were associated with the use of a generator placed outside the home. Usually, this involved placing the generator too near an open window or vent. This category also includes incidents in which a generator was running outside the home but inside a building (e.g., outside an apartment but still inside the building). Additional fatalities occurred during incidents in which generators were placed outside in non-fixed structure houses. A summary of all fatal scenarios in which a generator was located outside is provided in Appendix C to this report. Of special note is a 3-person fatality incident that involved a CO shutoff-equipped generator that was advertised as certified to the voluntary standard *ANSI/PGMA G300-2018, Safety and Performance of Portable Generators*. In this incident, it was reported that the generator was outside of the home where the exhaust was pointed towards an exterior door. It appears there was insufficient accumulation of CO near the generator to shut it off and the generator ran until the gas tank was empty.

**Table 13: Non-Fire CO Poisoning Deaths in the Fixed-Structure Home Location<sup>1</sup> by Location of the Generator,<sup>2</sup> 2011–2021**

Generator Location		Total	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 <sup>3</sup>	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	Incidents	430	54	36	35	28	34	43	49	32	50	43	26
	Deaths	581	76	41	46	36	56	58	64	44	61	63	36
Living space (non-basement)	Incidents	161	15	8	9	12	12	23	22	15	17	14	14
	Deaths	226	20	11	11	18	22	29	29	21	24	21	20
Basement/crawlspace	Incidents	87	16	5	12	9	9	6	8	5	9	4	4
	Deaths	118	25	5	16	11	13	13	10	6	10	5	4
Garage/enclosed carport/attached barn	Incidents	77	14	14	9	2	4	5	7	1	11	8	2
	Deaths	103	19	14	13	2	7	7	10	1	12	16	2
Inside house, no further information reported	Incidents	56	4	5	3	3	3	6	5	3	9	11	4
	Deaths	61	4	5	3	3	4	6	5	5	10	12	4
Transit Area (closet/laundry room/utility room/hallway)	Incidents	15	2	1	1	0	2	1	2	4	0	2	0
	Deaths	24	4	2	1	0	5	1	2	7	0	2	0
Outside the home	Incidents	16	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	0	3	2
	Deaths	28	2	2	2	1	2	2	4	2	0	5	6
Unknown location, but at home	Incidents	17	2	2	0	1	2	0	3	2	4	1	0
	Deaths	20	2	2	0	1	2	0	4	2	5	2	0

1 This refers to a fixed-structure used as a residence, including houses, mobile homes, apartments, townhouses, and structures attached to the house, such as an attached garage. Not included here are incidents that occurred in detached structures at home locations (e.g., detached garages, sheds), or at non-fixed location residences (e.g., travel trailers, houseboats).

2 Number of deaths associated with generators includes incidents where other consumer products may also have been involved. Other products include one or more of the following: lawn mowers, portable LP-fueled heaters, portable kerosene-fueled heaters, camp stoves, lanterns, outdoor cookers, furnaces, and wood stoves.

3 In 2015, there was one incident (one fatality) where the victim was running two generators simultaneously, one in the living space and one in the basement. This incident was included in the “living space” category because the victim was found in the living space.

Notes: Italicized numbers indicate that reporting of incidents is ongoing. Counts may change in subsequent reports.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

Table 14 sets forth non-fire CO fatalities that occurred in a fixed-structure home, characterized by ventilation status. Almost half of the incidents with generator-associated fatalities in the home (212 of the 430 incidents, 49%) did not contain information about the ventilation of the generator. Of the other 218 incidents, 140 accounting for 216 deaths, indicated there was no ventilation when the incident occurred. There were 78 incidents

associated with generators in which it was reported that some type of ventilation was attempted. Of these 78 incidents, 51 (64 deaths) were associated with incidents in which it was reported that there was an open or partially open window, door, garage door, or a combination of these. As also noted here, and in Table 13, 14 incidents (22 deaths) were associated with generators that were placed outside the home, near open windows, doors, or vents, where carbon monoxide entered the home. In 13 incidents (17 deaths), consumers actively, but unsuccessfully, attempted to vent generator exhaust outside through a window or door, or by using a fan.

**Table 14: Non-Fire CO Fatalities in the Fixed-Structure Home<sup>1</sup> Reported to CPSC Staff and Associated with Generators<sup>2</sup> Categorized by Status of Ventilation, 2011–2021**

Ventilation Status	Number of Incidents	Number of Deaths	Percentage of Deaths	Percentage of Deaths Where Ventilation is Known
<b>Non-fire CO fatalities in the home</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>100%</b>	-
<b>Some ventilation attempted</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>32%</b>
Open window(s), open door(s), an open garage door, or a combination of these	51	64	11%	20%
Actively trying to vent either by fans or by directing exhaust out a window or door	13	17	3%	5%
Placed outside of home, but near a window, door, A/C unit, or other outdoor location <sup>3</sup>	14	22	4%	7%
<b>No ventilation</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>Unknown ventilation</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>45%</b>	-

1 This refers to a fixed-location structure used as a residence, including houses, mobile homes, apartments, and townhouses, as well as structures attached to the house, such as an attached garage. Not included here are incidents that occurred in detached structures at home locations (e.g., detached garages and sheds) or at non-fixed location residences (e.g., travel trailers and houseboats).

2 Number of deaths associated with generators includes incidents where other consumer products may also have been involved. Other products include one or more of the following: lawn mowers, portable LP fueled heaters, portable kerosene-fueled heaters, camp stoves, lanterns, outdoor cookers, furnaces, and wood stoves.

3 One death occurred when a generator was placed outside an apartment in an unvented hallway.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

Table 15 presents a summary of the CO incidents and fatalities characterized by the size of the home in which the fatalities occurred. Home size information was available for 310 of 430 fatal incidents (422 of the 581 deaths). Information regarding the size of the homes reported in this document comes from one of two sources: (1) CPSC IDIs, which include information gathered from police, fire department, or public records; and (2) Internet databases of real estate information, which contain public record data. In most cases, Internet databases were consistent about the size of the home, because both databases are based on public records from the county, state, or municipality.

Sixty-five percent (201 of 310) of the reported fatal incidents (271 of 422 CO fatalities) associated with generators that occurred in the home, where the size of the structure was known, occurred in homes that were less than 1,500 square feet; and 86 percent (266 of 310) of the reported incidents and 87 percent of the deaths (358 of 422) occurred in homes that were less than 2,000 square feet. Table 15 includes incident location details for fatalities that occurred in apartments and mobile homes, as well as fixed structure homes. Fatal incidents that occurred in a detached structure are not included in these figures. The median home size involved in fatal generator-related CO poisoning deaths, where home size information is known, was approximately 1,250 square feet. As a point of reference, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's, *American Housing Survey for the United States: 2021*, the median housing unit as of 2021 was 1,473 square feet. Comparing the percentages of fatal incidents by home size to the U.S. Census figures, it appears that the fatal CO incidents are skewed toward smaller homes. Whether this is due to economic reasons, or because smaller-volume structures are filled more quickly by deadly carbon monoxide, or a combination of the two factors, or some yet-unidentified reason, is unclear.

**Table 15: Non-Fire CO Fatalities in the Fixed-Structure Home<sup>1</sup> Reported to CPSC Staff and Associated with Generators<sup>2</sup> Categorized by Size of Home, 2011–2021**

Home Size (in sq. feet) <sup>3</sup>	Number of Incidents	Number of Deaths	Percentage of Incidents	Percentage of Incidents Where Home Size is Known	Estimated Percentage of U.S. Occupied Housing Units (2019) <sup>4</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Under 500	4	5	1%	1%	3%
500–999	79	98	18%	25%	21%
1,000–1,499	118	168	27%	38%	26%
1,500–1,999	65	95	15%	21%	20%
2,000–2,499	22	27	5%	7%	13%
2,500–2,999	12	13	3%	4%	7%
3,000 or Larger	10	16	2%	3%	10%
Unknown	120	159	28%	-	-

1 This refers to a fixed-location structure used as a residence, including houses, mobile homes, apartments, and townhouses and structures attached to the house, such as an attached garage. Not included here are incidents that occurred in detached structures at home locations (e.g., detached garages and sheds) or at non-fixed location residences (e.g., travel trailers and houseboats).

2 Number of deaths associated with generators includes incidents where other consumer products may also have been involved. Other products include one or more of the following: lawn mowers, portable LP-fueled heaters, portable kerosene-fueled heaters, camp stoves, lanterns, outdoor cookers, furnaces, and wood stoves.

3 Home size based on CPSC IDIs or from various Internet real estate databases.

4 The 2019 housing unit figures are the most current year available.

Note: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

U.S. Census Bureau, *American Housing Survey for the United States: 2021*.

## Conclusions

Between 2011 and 2021, 900 non-fire CO-poisoning deaths from 710 incidents that were associated with EDTs were reported to CPSC staff. The majority of these deaths involved generators, or a generator and another consumer product. OEDTs, including garden tractors, lawn mowers, power washers or sprayers, and others, were associated with a much smaller number of deaths.

The majority of fatal incidents reported to CPSC staff involved a single fatality. Only a small percentage of victims were below the age of 25 years that were associated with generators reported to CPSC staff, and the majority of the victims were male. Victims age 25 years and older accounted for all of the non-fire CO poisoning deaths reported to CPSC staff that were associated with OEDTs. Males also accounted for nearly all of the deaths associated with OEDTs. Deaths associated with garden tractors and lawn mowers were often associated with an individual repairing or working on the product in an enclosed space. Most reported deaths occurred while an individual was at home.

CO alarms were seldom found installed in the fatal incidents contained in CPSC records—and many of these were inoperable at the time of the fatal incident.

Generators were often used as alternative sources of electricity, due to temporary power outages, or as power sources for temporary shelters. Power outages, most commonly weather-related, and utility company shut-off, due to a bill dispute, non-payment, or another reason, were the most common reasons for generator usage that resulted in a non-fire CO fatality.

The majority of the reported deaths associated with generators occurred at fixed-structure home locations. Also, in the majority of the fatal incidents known to have occurred in the home and involving generators occurred when a generator was placed in the living area, transit area or basement of the home. Another common scenario occurred when a generator was used inside an attached garage or shed. Generators were often used with little or no ventilation.

Conclusions about why consumers used generators indoors or determinations about whether users were aware of the potential non-fire CO-poisoning hazard could not be drawn with the available information.

Visit the CPSC's Carbon Monoxide Information Center—<http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Safety-Education/Safety-Education-Centers/Carbon-Monoxide-Information-Center/>—for the latest information on recalls, safety tips, safety standards, CO alarms, and downloadable injury prevention materials.

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## Appendix A: Epidemiology Data Retrieval Specifics

CPSC staff queried epidemiology data from the Consumer Product Safety Risk Management System (CPSRMS). Query results were reviewed to include only non-fire carbon monoxide poisoning fatality incidents related to EDTs and to exclude duplicates and out-of-scope cases, which were cases that were intentional in nature or that occurred during a work-related activity.

For this report, a fatal incident was deemed in scope if none of the following criteria were violated:

- Carbon monoxide was the primary or contributing factor in the fatality.
- The carbon monoxide was not fire-related.
- The source of the CO was an EDT, or an EDT used in conjunction with another non-fire-related CO generating source.
- The fatal injury was unintentional in nature.
- The EDT involved was a consumer product.
- The incident was not work related.

Date of Queries: 05/10/2022

Incident Dates: 1/1/11-12/31/21

Product Codes: 113, 606, 800-899, 1062, 1400-1464, 3285-3287

Narrative/Text Contains: "CARB" or "MONO"

## Appendix B: Engine Class of Generators Involved in Fatal CO Incidents

Table B-1 provides a summary of generator incidents and fatalities broken down by engine classification and year of incident.<sup>4</sup> This summary includes stationary generators (4 incidents, 6 deaths) and generator-welders (3 incidents, 6 deaths). These incidents are footnoted below the table. In the majority of cases (59%), CPSC staff was unable to obtain sufficient information about the engine class of the involved generator. In the incidents where engine classification could be determined, 35 percent involved Class I powered generators, and 56 percent involved single cylinder Class II powered generators. Handheld class generators were known to be involved in eight incidents (ten fatalities) during this period; while twin cylinder, Class II powered generators were known to be involved in six incidents and 14 fatalities.

Additionally, an incident in 2015 involved both a Class I and Class II, single-cylinder generator. This case was included in the “Class II” category in the summary table. In two other cases, each involving a single fatality, it was reported that two generators were both in use. In neither case was there information available on the generator classification. Additionally, in four other cases, one involving two fatalities, multiple generators were at the scene but it was unclear whether more than one was in operation at the time of the fatalities. In one case, two Class I powered generators were present and, in another, two Class II powered generators were present. Additionally, in one case three generators present of unknown classification were present, although it is not known how many were in use at the time of the fatal accident.

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<sup>4</sup> Staff used engine classifications defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and also the number of cylinders that the engine has. EPA broadly categorizes small SI engines as either non-handheld or handheld and within each of those categories further distinguishes them into different classes, which are based upon engine displacement. Non-handheld engines are divided into Class I and Class II, with Class I engines having displacement above 80 cc up to 225 cc and Class II having displacement at or above 225 cc but maximum power of 19 kilowatts (kW). Handheld engines, which are divided into Classes III, IV, and V, are all at or below 80 cc.



**Table B-1: Engine Class of Generators Involved in Fatal CO Incidents, 2011–2021**

Year	Handheld		Class I		Class II, Single Cylinder		Class II, Twin Cylinder		Unknown		Total	
	Incidents	Deaths	Incidents	Deaths	Incidents	Deaths	Incidents	Deaths	Incidents	Deaths	Incidents	Deaths
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>814</b>
2011	1	1	12	21	15 <sup>+</sup>	24 <sup>+</sup>	1	5	40 <sup>+</sup>	45 <sup>+</sup>	69 <sup>+</sup>	96 <sup>+</sup>
2012	2	3	5	7	6	7			30	32	43	49
2013			10	15	16	20			20	24	46	59
2014	1	1	4	8	5	8	1 <sup>#</sup>	1 <sup>#</sup>	27	31	38 <sup>#</sup>	49 <sup>#</sup>
2015			6	13	14 <sup>*</sup>	18 <sup>*</sup>	1	1	31 <sup>+</sup>	45 <sup>+</sup>	52	77
2016	1	2	11	17	13	19			32	37	57	75
2017			11	15	17 <sup>#</sup>	20 <sup>#</sup>	1	2	38	46	67	83
2018	1	1	10	16	16	23			30	36	57	76
2019			14	19	19	21			46	55	79	95
2020	1	1	9	10	14	21	2 <sup>@</sup>	5 <sup>@</sup>	51	66	77	103
2021	1	1	2	2	14	25			22	24	39	52

\* One incident (one fatality) in 2015 involved both a Class I and Class II generator. This case was included in the “Class II” category.

# These counts include an incident with one fatality that involved a generator/welder.

+ In 2011, three incidents involved stationary generators: one incident classified as a Class II, Single Cylinder (two deaths), and two incidents of unknown classification (one involving two deaths and the other involving a single death). In 2017, there was an incident involving a stationary generator of unknown engine classification.

@ In 2020, there was an incident involving a Class II, Twin Cylinder generator/welder used as a generator in a home which killed four individuals.

Italicized numbers indicate that reporting of incidents is ongoing. Counts may change in subsequent reports.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

When an IDI did not report the generator’s engine displacement, or it was not obtainable from other information in the IDI, staff classified generators with a reported wattage of 3.5 kW and larger as being powered by a class II engine and those less than 3.5 kW as powered by either a handheld or a class I engine. To distinguish the handheld-powered generators from the class I-powered generators when there was no information to ascertain the engine displacement, generators with wattage 2 kW and larger, up to 3.5 kW, were considered to have a class I engine. There was only one generator with wattage below 2kW in which the engine displacement could not be ascertained. That was a 1,000 watt generator, which staff classified as a handheld generator because staff’s online review of generators nominally, in this size, showed them being powered by handheld engines. To distinguish the single-cylinder class II engines from the twin-cylinder class II engines, staff found from looking at the EPA’s exhaust emission certification database at: <https://www.epa.gov/compliance-and-fuel-economy-data/annual-certification-data-vehicles-engines-and-equipment#small-nrsj> that twin-cylinder class II engines largely have a maximum engine power of nominally 12 or 13 kW and higher. Staff then found, from looking at manufacturers’ generator specifications available online, that generators with engines having power equal to or greater 12 or 13 kW, typically have a rated power of 9kW and higher. Therefore, generators with rated power of 3.5 kW up to 9 kW were considered powered by a single-cylinder class II engine and those 9 kW and greater were considered powered by a twin-cylinder class II engine.

## Appendix C: Fatal CO Exposure Incidents Where Generator Was Located Outside the Victim Location

Table C-1 provides a summary of portable generator incidents and fatalities where the generator was placed outside the victim’s location. The table presents the data broken down by the specific type of incident location. This table demonstrates that even when a generator is placed outside the victim location, there can still be potentially fatal scenarios. In fact, 5 percent of all generator incidents (34 of 624) and 7 percent of fatalities (55 of 814) occurred when the victim placed the generator outside of their occupied area.

Note that the incidents and deaths presented in this table do not directly correspond to those shown for “Outside the Home” incidents as shown in Table 13 because the latter table only presents incidents that occurred in fixed-structure homes. This table includes all locations, including vehicles, apartments in business locations, cabins and trailers.

**Table C-1: Fatal CO Generator Incidents Where the Generator Was Located Outside of the Occupied Space, 2011–2021**

Location of victim(s)	Incidents	Deaths
<b>Total – Occupied Area</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>55</b>
House/Mobile Home	14	24
Apartment	1	2
Cabin	1	1
Vehicle: RV/Camper Shell	4	9
Vehicle: Automobile/Truck	1	1
Camper Trailer/Horse Trailer	8	11
Boat	1	2
Outside Apartment, Inside Building	1	2
Outside Trailer, Inside Building	1	1
Outside (near generator)	2	2

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

The two categories “Outside Apartment, Inside Building” and “Outside Trailer, Inside Building” are included here, even though the generator was placed inside a building. It is surmised that the victims believed that they had adequately mitigated the dangers of CO exposure by placing the generator outside their living space. There were also two incidents involving one fatality each where the victim was located outside near the generator. In one incident, a generator was in use in a parking lot, but it was unclear exactly where the decedent was – outside near the generator or inside a vehicle near the generator – this case was included in the “Outside (near generator)” category. In the other incident identified as “Outside (near generator)”, the victim was found sitting in a chair outside of a camper next to a running generator. Note that there was another case not included here where there was insufficient information to identify if the incident occurred in a temporary

structure (camper, tent, etc.) or if the generator was located outside. The minimal description available simply notes that the incident occurred on or off a Bureau of Land Management road.

Of special note is a case in September 2021 where a 54-year old woman and her two children (a 23 years old female and a 17 year old male) died of CO poisoning while using a CO shutoff-equipped generator that was advertised as certified to the voluntary standard *ANSI/PGMA G300-2018, Safety and Performance of Portable Generators*. It was reported that the generator was outside of their home where the exhaust was pointed towards an exterior door. It appears there was insufficient accumulation of CO near the generator to shut it off. The generator ran until the gas tank was empty.

## Appendix D: Carboxyhemoglobin Levels Present in CO Fatalities

Carboxyhemoglobin (COHb) is a complex of carbon monoxide and hemoglobin that forms in red blood cells when carbon monoxide is inhaled. COHb poisoning can be fatal in large doses because it hinders delivery of oxygen to the body. COHb data are helpful in estimating the concentration of CO in the product exhaust and the lethality of the product, which can affect the speed of onset of harm. This information may be used by CPSC staff to assist in determining the best way to address the CO hazard presented by generators and other EDTs.

In healthy adults, a COHb level of 40 to 50 percent in the blood approximately correlates with symptoms of confusion, unconsciousness, coma, and possible death; a level of 50 to 70 percent approximately correlates with symptoms of coma, brain damage, seizure, and death; and a level greater than 70 percent is typically fatal.<sup>5</sup> COHb levels were available for 479 of the 900 fatalities (53% of the CO fatalities). Table D-1 shows the frequency of reports by COHb level categories. Percentages in the table are the category proportions of reported COHb levels. Eighty-three percent (370 of the 479) of fatalities had reported COHb levels of 50 percent or greater.

**Table D-1: Carboxyhemoglobin Levels Associated with Engine-Driven Tools Non-Fire CO Poisoning Deaths, 2011–2021<sup>1</sup>**

COHb Level	All Engine-Driven Tools (EDTs)		Generators		Other Engine-Driven Tools (OEDTs)	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
<b>Total</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Reported Levels</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100%</b>
Less than 30%	26	5%	25	6%	1	2%
30–39.9%	14	3%	12	3%	2	5%
40–49.9%	40	8%	38	9%	2	5%
50–59.9%	72	15%	68	16%	4	10%
60–69.9%	161	34%	148	34%	13	31%
70–79.9%	123	26%	105	24%	18	43%
80–89.9%	36	8%	34	8%	2	5%
90–99.9%	7	1%	7	2%	0	0%
<b>Not reported<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>421</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>-</b>

<sup>1</sup> Percentages shown are the percentage of reported COHb levels per category.

<sup>2</sup> One victim is included in the “Not reported” category because the report simple stated that the measurement was beyond the instrument’s calibration but did not provide any number.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Inkster S.E. *Health hazard assessment of CO poisoning associated with emissions from a portable, 5.5 Kilowatt, gasoline-powered generator*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. 2004.

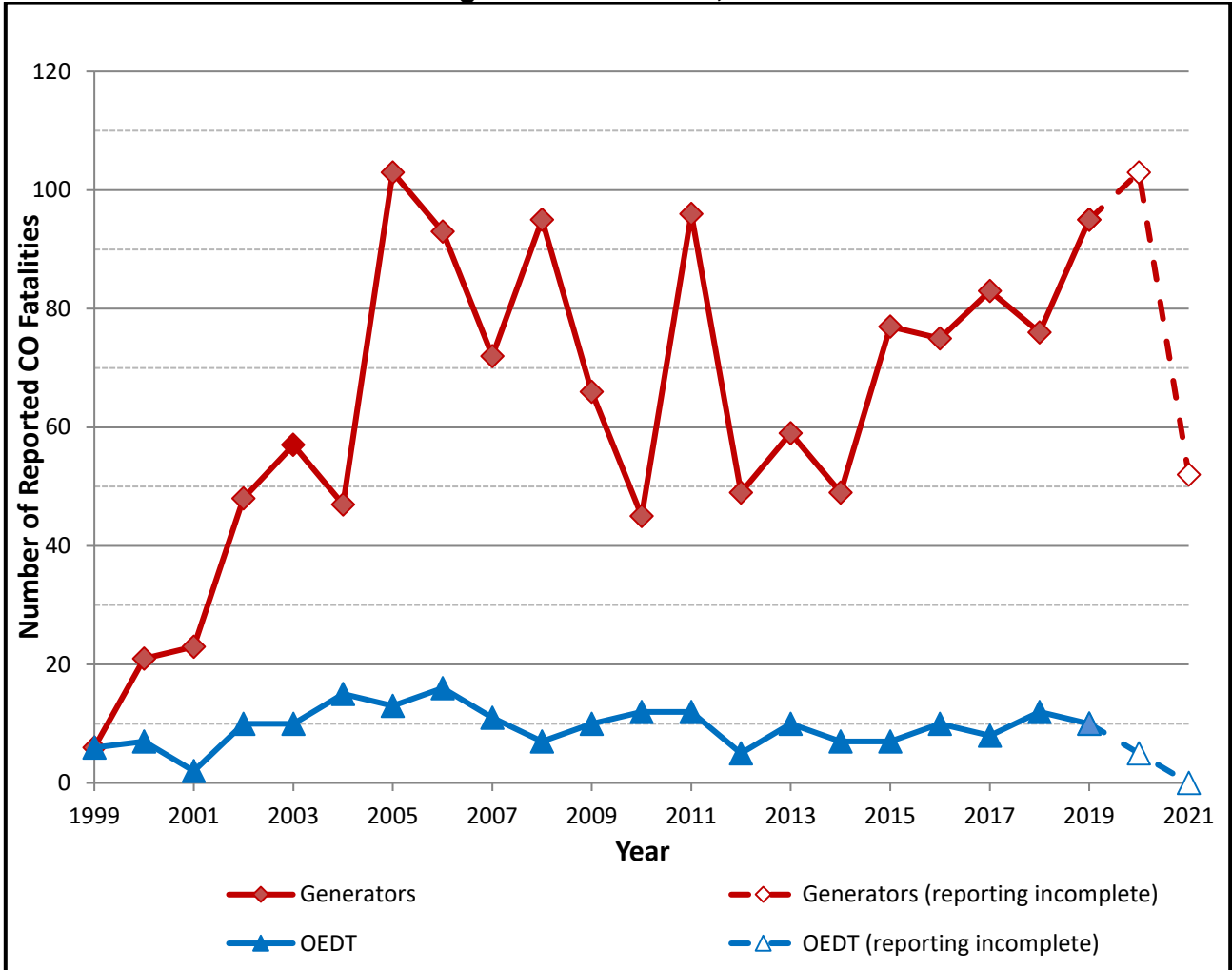
## Appendix E: Historical Data

Figure 1 illustrates the trend in the number of non-fire CO fatalities associated with the use of generators and other EDTs from 1999 to 2021. The number of generator-related fatalities increased at a steady rate from six in 1999 to 103 in 2005. From 2006 through 2014, the number of yearly fatalities has oscillated between the low 40s and below 100 fatalities per year. And, finally, it appears that the annual number of CO fatalities attributed to generators has been increasing from 2014 through 2020. It should be noted that, due to reporting delays, fatality counts reported in future annual reports for the most recent years are likely to increase. Since the 2011 annual report, the most recent year's counts have increased by an average of about 45 percent from the previous report, when additional information became available. Between the second and third year, the average increase, report to report, is about seven percent. The 2020 fatalities count equals the previous high count from the significant hurricane year of 2005. But, the 2020 count should be considered an incomplete count and may increase in next year's report.

Over the last three years, the most recent year's counts have increased by an average of about 74 percent from the previous report. Between the second and third most recent years, the average increase over the past three years, report to report, is about eight percent.

The number of CO fatalities associated with the use of OEDTs has been relatively steady over the period 1999 through 2020.

**Figure 1: Number of Reported Non-Fire CO Fatalities Associated with Engine-Driven Tools, 1999–2021**



Note: Data presented in this graph are based on anecdotal data; no statistical inference about the trend is possible.  
 Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Directorate for Epidemiology, 2022.