



Jeb Bush
Governor

John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A.
Secretary

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Monday, August 16, 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Jeannine Mallory,
Public Information Director
727-824-6908

****HURRICANE CHARLEY INFORMATION SHEET ****

HEALTH OFFICIALS WARN OF CARBON MONOXIDE DANGERS

--Precautions after Hurricane Charley can help prevent poisoning--

As Floridians begin the task of recovery from Hurricane Charley, the Florida Department of Health urges the public to avoid **carbon monoxide** (CO) exposure by taking precautions with gas-powered appliances and charcoal or gas grills.

Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, and tasteless gas, and is highly poisonous. Depending on the level of exposure, CO may cause fatigue, weakness, chest pains for those with heart disease, shortness of breath upon exertion, nausea, vomiting, headaches, confusion, lack of coordination, impaired vision, loss of consciousness, and in severe cases, death.

DOH recommends the following precautions to help prevent carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Do not burn charcoal or gas grills inside a house, garage, vehicle, tent or fireplace.
- Do not use gas-powered generators or pressure washers indoors, not even in the garage.
- If you suspect you are experiencing any symptoms of CO poisoning, open doors and windows, turn off gas appliances and go outside. In cases of severe CO poisoning, call 911 emergency services or the nearest Poison Information Center at 1-800-222-1222.
- For more information about indoor air quality, contact the Florida Department of Health's Indoor Air Toxics Hotline at 800-543-8279 or visit the Department of Health website at www.doh.state.fl.us.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently announced the availability of 30- and 15-second public service announcements in English and Spanish. The CDC is encouraging radio stations to download the public service announcements free from <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/airpollution/carbonmonoxide/> (scroll down to "Public Service Announcements for Carbon Monoxide"). Other broadcast and print media can also use the information to alert viewers and readers. For further information, please contact your local county health department, or visit www.doh.state.fl.us or www.FloridaDisaster.org.

###

The mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of residents and visitors through public and private community efforts.