



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
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For Immediate Release:

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State Fire Marshal Urges South Carolinians to be Fire Safe During Hurricane

With South Carolina in the anticipated path of Hurricane Matthew, State Fire Marshal Bert Polk is urging citizens to be fire safe.

“First, I urge every family to have on hand a [basic disaster supply kit](#),” Polk said. “This includes first aid supplies, a battery operated portable radio, flashlight, and extra batteries. During a hurricane, power outages are anticipated and I want to remind everyone the use of candles and portable generators can pose additional hazards.”

South Carolinians can reduce their risks of becoming a fire casualty by identifying potential hazards and following these safety tips:

Candle Safety

- Use a sturdy candle holder and place on an uncluttered surface.
- Light candles carefully. Keep your hair and any loose clothing away from the flame.
- Don’t burn a candle all the way down — put it out before it gets too close to the holder or container.
- Never use a candle if oxygen is used in the home.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended. Extinguish it upon leaving the room.

Generator Safety

- Operate a generator in a well-ventilated location outdoors away from doors, windows, and vent openings.
- Never use a generator in an attached garage, even with the door open.
- Place generators so exhaust fumes can’t enter the home through windows, doors, or other openings.
- Never refuel a generator while it is running. Turn off generators and let them cool down before refueling.
- Install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in your home. Follow manufacturer’s instructions for correct placement and mounting height.
- Store generator fuel in a properly labeled container. Store the container outside of living areas.

Chief Polk also offers these cooking related fire safety tips:

- Never use portable fuel-burning camping equipment inside a home or garage, unless specifically designed for use in an enclosed space and provides instructions for safe use in an enclosed area.
- Never burn charcoal inside a home or garage.

Lastly, if there is a fire emergency, call 9-1-1 as soon as possible and remain outdoors. Never return inside a burning building.

The State Fire Marshal’s Office and the Fire Academy make up the Division of Fire and Life Safety, which is a division of the S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation.