

Barren River

DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Press Release Contact: Kim Flora, Ashli McCarty
Phone: (270)781-8039 Ext. 117 (Kim) Ext. 146 (Ashli)
Topic: DISASTER RECOVERY SAFETY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DISASTER RECOVERY AND SAFETY RESOURCES

The recent tornado outbreak in Kentucky and the Midwest United States has caused devastation and loss like we've never experienced before in our district. Our hearts pour out to those who lost their lives, homes, and belongings. After a natural disaster, there are many things we must consider in order to stay safe and healthy as we rebuild our lives. The following information is crucial to preserving public health and safety during this time. Visit our website for more information at <https://www.barrenriverhealth.org/disaster-resources>.

Power Outage/Alternative Fuel Use Safety

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death if inhaled. When power outages occur during natural disasters and other emergencies, the use of alternative sources of fuel or electricity for heating or cooking can cause CO to build up in a home, garage, or camper and to poison the people and animals inside.

CO Poisoning Prevention Tips:

- Check or change the batteries in your CO detector every six months. If you don't have a battery-powered or battery back-up CO detector, buy one soon.
- Have your heating system, water heater and any other gas, oil, or coal burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year.
- Keep vents and flues free of debris. Debris can block ventilation lines.
- Never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a garage.
- Never run a motor vehicle, generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine less than 20 feet from an open window, door, or vent where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area.
- Never use a charcoal grill, hibachi, lantern, or portable camping stove inside a home, tent, or camper.
- Never run a generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed structure, even if the doors or windows are open.
- If you suspect CO poisoning, call 911 or a health care professional right away.

CO poisoning is entirely preventable. You can protect yourself and your family by learning the symptoms of CO poisoning and how to prevent it. For more information, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/co/default.htm>

Food Safety After Power Outage

Refrigerators will only keep food safe for up to 4 hours during a power outage. Keep the door closed as much as possible. Discard refrigerated perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers after 4 hours without power. After a power outage **never** taste food to determine its safety. When in doubt, throw it out! Visit <https://www.foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/food-safety-during-power-outage> for safety information on specific foods.

Recommended Immunizations Following a Disaster

Due to the exposures that could potentially be dangerous to health, it is important that we make sure we are up to date on vaccinations following a disaster. Vaccination recommendations vary based on age. To learn more, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/disease/vaccrecdisplaced.html>. Call your local health department to see if your vaccination records are available.

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Caring □ Reliable □ Ready
1109 State St. □ P.O. Box 1157 □ Bowling Green, KY 42102
Phone: (270) 781-8039 □ Fax: (270) 796-8946



www.BarrenRiverHealth.org