



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

**\* \* \* Fact Sheet \* \* \***

## **Cooking When the Power Goes Off**

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene reminds residents that cooking meals after a storm has knocked out electricity or gas lines can be a problem and may be hazardous. Follow these basic rules:

- Charcoal or gas grills are the most obvious alternative sources of heat for cooking. **NEVER USE THEM INDOORS.** In doing so you risk both asphyxiation from carbon monoxide and the chance of starting a fire that could destroy your home.
- Likewise, camp stoves that use gasoline or solid fuel should always be used outdoors.
- Small electrical appliances can be used to prepare meals if you have access to an electrical generator.
- Wood can be used for cooking in many situations. You can cook in a fireplace if the chimney is sound. Don't start a fire in a fireplace that has a broken chimney. Be sure the damper is open.
- If you're cooking on a wood stove, make sure the stove pipe has not been damaged.
- If you have to build a fire outside, build it away from buildings, never in a carport. Sparks can easily get into the ceiling and start a house fire.
- Never use gasoline to get a wood or charcoal fire started.
- Make sure any fire is well-contained. A metal drum or stones around the fire bed are necessary precautions. A charcoal grill is a good place in which to build a wood fire. Be sure to put out any fire when you are through with it.
- When cooking is not possible, many canned foods can be eaten cold.

*The above information derived from facts developed by Clemson Cooperative Extension following Hurricane Hugo.*

Reviewed Fall 2012

Toll Free 1-877-4MD-DHMH – TTY/Maryland Relay Service 1-800-735-2258

Web Site: [www.dhmh.maryland.gov](http://www.dhmh.maryland.gov)