



U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
4330 EAST WEST HIGHWAY
BETHESDA, MD 20814

October 27, 2017

Mr. C. Douglas McMillon
President and Chief Executive Officer
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
702 S. W. 8th Street
Bentonville, AR 72716

Dear Mr. McMillon,

We are writing to seek your assistance in protecting American consumers from the unreasonable risk of injury and death associated with portable generators. This problem has become even more urgent after the many deaths following the recent hurricanes in Florida, Texas and Puerto Rico.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning from portable generators kills at least 73 Americans a year, and causes injuries, some catastrophic, in at least 2,800 people a year.^[1] And we know these numbers are low, particularly with respect to injuries, since our data come from Emergency Departments and most who suffer CO injuries treat in hyperbaric chambers. These numbers are staggering, and the deaths and injuries are avoidable. You, as a major retailer of portable generators, have the opportunity to help reduce these deaths and injuries by encouraging your suppliers to bring to market safer portable generators as quickly as possible.

A portable generator can produce CO levels that are 450 to 1000 times that of the rate of CO production of various idling cars that meet current EPA automotive emissions standards. Most American consumers have no awareness whatsoever of this alarming fact. As a result, consumers unwittingly become exposed to lethal concentrations of CO when they operate portable generators in their homes, in open garages, tents, trailers or sheds, or too close to open doors or windows. One recent death occurred with the portable generator outside the garage but with the garage door open just far enough to run the cord through. These types of scenarios occur with distressing frequency. After every major storm, we at CPSC brace ourselves for the inevitable reports of deaths and injuries associated with consumers using portable generators during a power outage.

It is now technically feasible to make much safer portable generators and some suppliers are in the process of incorporating these new design features into their products. As you make your

^[1] CPSC Proposed Safety Standard for Portable Generators, p. 112. Available at: <https://cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/ProposedRuleSafetyStandardforPortableGenerators.pdf>

upcoming purchasing decisions for portable generator offerings, we urge you to push your suppliers to develop as quickly as possible portable generators that will truly address unintentional CO poisonings. By doing so, you will save lives by offering safer products, and you will support the industry's ongoing investments in these safety technologies. Together, we can all help reduce these preventable deaths and injuries.

Sincerely,



Elliot F. Kaye
Commissioner



Marietta S. Robinson
Commissioner

cc: Kimberly Horne, Product Safety and Compliance Director