

# GENERATOR SAFETY

Portable generators are useful when temporary or remote electric power is needed following a storm or other power outage event, but they also can be hazardous. Carbon monoxide poisoning, electric shock and fire are the primary causes of injury and death that stem from electrical generator use each year. This storm season, use your generator safely by following these simple tips:



1. Read all operating instructions and manufacturer warnings before using the equipment.
2. Always use generators outdoors, away from doors, window and vents.
3. NEVER use generators in homes, garages, basements, crawl spaces, or other enclosed or partially enclosed areas, even with ventilation.
4. If you are connecting a generator into your home electrical system, have a qualified electrician install an emergency power transfer system; or your utility company may be able to install an appropriate transfer switch.
5. Install carbon monoxide alarms in your home as a back-up safety feature; this will warn you of any harmful fumes that may seep in from exterior generator use.
6. Use only heavy-duty, outdoor extension cords to plug appliances directly into the generator. Make sure the entire extension cord is long enough for the whole distance to the generator as it is not advisable to use multiple extension cords. Also make sure the extension cord is free of cuts or tears, and the plug has all 3 prongs, especially a grounding pin.
7. Before use, inspect portable generators for any damage or loose fuel lines that may have occurred during transportation and/or handling.
8. Dry your hands before touching the generator.
9. NEVER plug a generator into a wall outlet as this can cause fatal electrocution to utility workers trying to repair lines, as well as others served by the same utility transformer.
10. Keep the generator dry by setting it on a covered, elevated surface (i.e., canopy-like structures).
11. Always store fuel outside of living areas in properly labeled, non-glass containers.
12. Before refueling the generator, turn it off and allow it to cool to prevent it from igniting the fuel.
13. Store fuel away from any fuel-burning appliances.

If your portable generator has been in storage:

- Check the oil and gas before starting.
- Start up the generator once a month to keep it in working condition and to be certain the battery hasn't died.
- At least once a year, clean the terminals and coat them with an anti-oxide grease to prevent corrosion.
- Always use clean gas and be sure no rain water or storm debris from previous season is in the fuel.
- Do not start the generator right after filling the tank if any gasoline has spilled onto the generator. Let the gas evaporate before starting.
- Let the generator run for several minutes before plugging in any appliance. For light loads, you can plug the appliance directly into the ground fault circuit interrupter receptacle. If you are using extension cords to run several appliances, plug them in at different times several minutes apart, never at the same time.