

11 Portable Generator Safety Tips

1. Be sure to use your generator correctly.

Using a generator incorrectly can lead to dangerous situations:

- Carbon monoxide poisoning from engine exhaust. Even if you can't smell exhaust fumes, you may still have been exposed to carbon monoxide. If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak while using a generator, get fresh air right away. If you experience serious symptoms, get medical attention immediately. Install battery-operated carbon monoxide alarms. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Electric shock or electrocution.
- Fire.

2. Use a portable generator only when necessary, and only to power essential equipment.

3. Position generators outdoors and well away from any structure.

Running a generator inside any enclosed or partially enclosed structure can lead to dangerous and often fatal levels of carbon monoxide. Keep generators positioned outside and at least 15 feet away from open windows so exhaust does not enter your home/business or a neighboring home/business.

4. Keep the generator dry.

Operate your generator on a dry surface under an open, canopy-like structure and make sure your hands are dry before touching the generator. Do not use the generator in rainy or wet conditions.

5. Disconnect the power coming into your home/business.

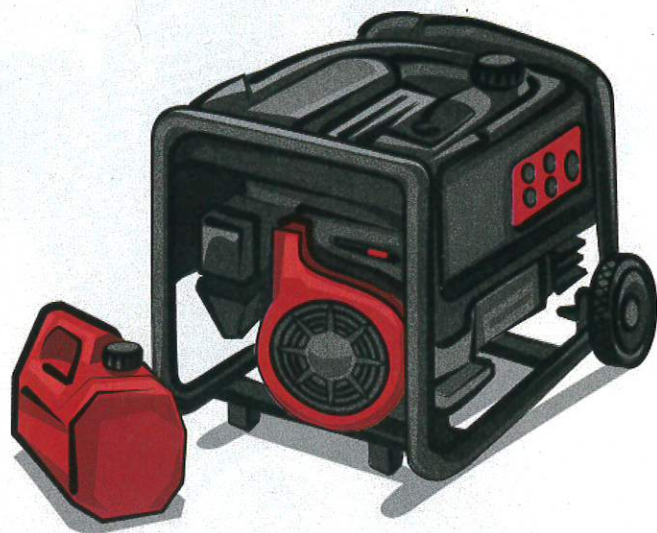
Before you operate your generator, disconnect your normal source of power. Otherwise, power from your generator could be sent back into the utility company lines, creating a hazardous situation for utility workers.

6. Plug equipment directly into the generator.

Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords that are in good working condition and have a wire gauge that can handle the electric load of any connected appliances.

7. Make sure your generator is properly grounded.

Grounding generators can help prevent



shocks and electrocutions. Refer to OSHA guidelines for grounding requirements for portable generators.

8. DO NOT plug the generator into a wall outlet.

NEVER try to power your house/business by plugging the generator into a wall outlet or the main electrical panel. Only a licensed electrician should connect a generator to a main electrical panel by installing the proper equipment according to local electrical codes. Make sure the electrician installs an approved automatic transfer switch so you can disconnect your home's wiring from the utility system before you use the generator.

9. Maintain an adequate supply of fuel.

Know your generator's rate of fuel consumption at various power output levels. Carefully consider how much fuel you can safely store and for how long. Always store fuels in a specifically designed container in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place, away from heat sources.

10. Turn the generator off and let it cool before refueling.

Use the type of fuel recommended in the manufacturer's instructions.

11. Inspect and maintain your generator regularly.

Before you engage in activities that could impact utility services, such as electricity or natural gas, contact your local utility company to ensure that your activities are done safely.