

PORTABLE GENERATOR SAFETY



A backup source of power can keep you up and running during a power outage. However, generators can be dangerous if connected or used improperly. If you are considering a generator to provide back-up power during an outage, here are some helpful tips to ensure you make an informed and safe purchase.

DETERMINING WHAT TO BACK-UP

Choose a generator rated for more power than you think you will need. Some appliances, particularly ones with motors (e.g. refrigerators), may use more power when they first start up. Be aware of these loads, their start-up or 'in-rush' power requirement, and the generator's ability to meet these demands. This is best determined by an electrician.

DETERMINING WHAT TO BACK-UP

Only back-up your most critical needs during an outage, such as your refrigerator, necessary lighting for safety, medical devices, and mobile devices. If you have digital phone service to your home, you may need to back-up your phone modem to maintain phone service during an outage. Lastly, the more load you connect, the more fuel you will need and the louder the generator will typically run.

SAFETY HAZARDS

Every year people die in portable generator-related incidents. The primary hazards to avoid when using a generator are carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, electric shock, electrocution and fire. Follow the directions supplied with the generator. Do not run a portable generator indoors. Place the generator outdoors, in a well-ventilated area away from open doors or windows, and on stable ground away from vegetation.

GETTING CONNECTED

Use a heavy-duty, outdoor extension cord and UL-approved plug strip (if needed) to connect electrical equipment to a portable generator. Be sure it's rated for more than the sum of the loads of the connected appliances. Make sure the cord has no cuts or tears, is grounded (3-prong plug), and is placed to avoid a tripping hazard.

BEWARE OF BACK-FEEDING

Never try to back-feed your house by plugging a generator into a wall outlet or temporarily wiring into the electrical panel. This can be extremely dangerous for you, your neighbors, and utility workers who may be working on power lines. Electrocution is the fifth leading cause of all reported occupational deaths.

WORK WITH AN ELECTRICIAN

Play it safe—hire a licensed electrician to help you with back-up solutions. If you decide to permanently wire a stationary generator directly to your home, California state law mandates that you notify us. The only approved method to connect a generator to house wiring is by having a qualified electrician install a power transfer switch, in compliance with national, state and local electrical codes. Work with a licensed electrician to ensure the safety of you, your family, and utility workers.



MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION TIPS

Ensure you have enough fuel for your generator for extended outages, and only store fuel in approved containers in a safe location. Read the generator owner's manual and note all appropriate maintenance, operation, and storage directions. Running your generator periodically and treating the fuel with an approved fuel stabilizer will ensure the fuel doesn't degrade while stored and the generator will run properly when you need it the most.