

Lives On The Line

PORTABLE GENERATOR SAFETY



Connecting a portable generator directly to your household wiring can be deadly to you and others.

A generator that is directly connected to your home's wiring can "backfeed" onto the power lines connected to your home and injure neighbors or utility workers.

The only safe way to connect a portable electric generator to your existing wiring is to have a licensed electrical contractor install a transfer switch.

Portable generators are useful when temporary or remote electric power is needed, but they can be hazardous. The primary hazards? Carbon monoxide poisoning, electric shock or electrocution, and fire.

Don't connect generators directly to your home's wiring nor plug it into a regular household outlet without an appropriate transfer switch installed.

Power from generators connected directly to household wiring can backfeed along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including lineworkers making repairs.

Make sure your generator is properly grounded and keep the generator dry.

Use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to help prevent electrocutions and electrical shock injuries.

Make sure extension cords used with generators are rated for the load, and are free of cuts, worn insulation, and have three-pronged plugs.

Do not overload the generator. A portable generator should be used only when necessary, and only to power essential equipment or appliances.

Keep children away from portable generators at all times.

Opening doors and windows or operating fans to ventilate will not prevent CO build-up in the home. Even with a CO alarm, you should NEVER use a gasoline-powered generator inside your home, in a garage, or partially enclosed spaces.

Use carbon monoxide detectors in nearby enclosed spaces to monitor levels. Generators can produce high levels of carbon monoxide very quickly, which can be deadly.

Turn off all appliances powered by the generator before shutting down the generator.

Make sure fuel for the generator is stored safely, away from living areas, in properly labeled containers, and away from fuel-burning appliances. Before re-fueling, always turn the generator off and let it cool down.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI), www.esfi.org



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