

If not properly installed and operated, a portable generator can become deadly. Generators can kill via electric shock or carbon monoxide fumes.

Using a generator indoors can kill you in minutes!



Carbon Monoxide Hazards

Never use a generator in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces.

Generators can produce high levels of carbon monoxide very quickly.

When you use a portable generator, remember that you cannot smell or see carbon monoxide. Even if you can't smell exhaust fumes, you may still be exposed to it.

When in use, place a generator far, far away from any structure housing workers.

Most of the serious carbon monoxide poisonings have been caused by generator exhaust fumes drifting into doors, windows, vents, and crawl spaces.

If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak while using a generator, get to fresh air right away.

Do not delay. Carbon monoxide can rapidly lead to full incapacitation and death.

If you experience serious symptoms, get medical attention immediately.

Inform medical staff that carbon monoxide poisoning is suspected.

If you experienced symptoms while indoors, have someone call the fire department to determine when it is safe to re-enter the building.

Follow these safety tips to protect against carbon monoxide poisoning:

Never use a generator indoors, including in homes, garages, basements, crawl spaces, and other enclosed or partially enclosed areas, even with ventilation.

Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent carbon monoxide build-up in the home.

Follow the instructions that come with your generator. L

Install battery-operated carbon monoxide alarms or plug-in carbon monoxide alarms with battery back-up, according to the manufacturer's installation instructions. The carbon monoxide alarms should be certified to the requirements of the latest safety standards for carbon monoxide alarms (UL 2034, IAS 6-96, or CSA 6.19.01).

Electrical Hazards

Keep the generator dry and do not use in rain or wet conditions.

To protect from moisture, operate it on a dry surface under an open, canopy-like structure. **Make sure your hands are dry before touching the generator.**

Plug appliances directly into the generator or, use a heavy duty, outdoor-rated extension cord that is rated (in watts or amps) at least equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads. Check that the entire cord is free of cuts or tears and that the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin.

Never try to power the building wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet, a practice known as "backfeeding." This is an extremely dangerous practice that presents an electrocution risk to utility workers and neighbors served by the same utility transformer.

It also bypasses some of the built-in household circuit protection devices.

If you must connect the generator to the house wiring to power appliances, have a qualified electrician install the appropriate equipment in accordance with local electrical codes.

Or

Check with your utility company to see if it can install an appropriate power transfer switch.

For power outages, permanently installed stationary generators are better suited for providing backup power to the building. Even a properly connected portable generator can become overloaded. This may result in overheating or stressing the generator components, possibly leading to a generator failure.

Fire Hazards

Never store fuel for the generator in the building.

Gasoline, propane, kerosene, and other flammable liquids should be stored outside in properly labeled, non-glass safety containers.

Do not store them near a fuel-burning appliance, such as a natural gas water heater.

If the fuel is spilled or the container is not sealed properly, invisible vapors from the fuel can travel along the ground and can be ignited by the appliance's pilot light or by arcs from electric switches in the appliance.

Before refueling the generator, turn it off and let it cool down. Gasoline spilled on hot engine parts could ignite.