

PORTABLE GENERATOR SAFETY INFORMATION



Follow safety precautions when using a generator to keep you and your family safe.

Portable generators are useful as short-term and low power sources for running essential home appliances and electronics. For example, refrigerators, sump pumps, and laptops.

Generators need to be well-maintained so they are ready to operate, and must be used safely.

When buying or renting a portable generator, choose one that is listed by a qualified testing laboratory.

Read the manufacturer's instructions on how to use the generator.

Portable generators should be used outdoors, in well-ventilated areas at least 20 feet from all doors, windows, and vent openings.

About Portable Generators

- Generators should be placed on stable ground.
- The engine is started and stopped manually.
- Fuel such as propane or gasoline is required. Store fuel in an approved safety can outside of living areas in a safe location, such as a locked shed or other protected shelter outdoors.
- Only add fuel to the generator once it's in a safe location to be turned on.
- During extended power interruptions, refueling may be necessary.

Use generators properly to avoid dangers like electrocution or electric shock, fire, and carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

Prevent electrocution or electric shock.

Generators rely on combustible fuels and generate electricity. There are plenty of fire risks created by these units.

- Before each use, check to make sure the cords are free of cuts or tears.
- During use, protect the cord from getting pinched or crushed.
- Avoid using a generator in wet conditions. Make sure to protect the generator from moisture where water cannot reach it, puddle, or drain under it.

While portable generators can be physically moved from one place to another, many require a "hook-up" that connects the unit to a home or building's electrical circuit before it can be used. Some towns or municipalities may require an electrical permit or inspection. Please contact local building and fire departments.

Follow installation and operating directions to use a generator safely and efficiently.

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Prevent fire.

The presence of fuel or oil spills around the generator, leakages from the unit's fuel system and fuel supply lines, and the presence of combustible materials around the generator can pose a risk of fire or explosion.

- Allow plenty of time to cool the generator before refueling. Gasoline vapors can easily ignite from hot surfaces, causing a flash fire and severe injuries.
- Gasoline, propane, kerosene, diesel and other flammable liquids should be stored outside living areas, in properly labeled, non-glass safety cans or containers.
- Never place a portable generator on or underneath decks and porches, and do not use in sheds. Heat given off by the motor or improper refueling can start a fire.

Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

Generators release carbon monoxide, a poisonous, deadly gas. CO is an odorless, colorless gas created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely.

Install CO alarms inside your home. CO alarms alert you when there are dangerous levels of carbon monoxide and give you time to escape.

- Only use generators outdoors in well-ventilated areas. Deadly exhaust fumes can enter a building through any opening and cause severe injury or death to those inside.
- **DO NOT** use a generator in a garage that is attached to a home, even if doors and windows are open.

- Using fans will not prevent carbon monoxide buildup in a home.
- Keep the generator outside, at least 20 feet from all doors, windows, and vent openings.

Never assume you are safe. CO from generators is completely colorless and odorless, so you won't know it's there.

- Place generators so that exhaust fumes cannot enter the home through windows, doors, or other openings in the building. The exhaust must be directed away from the building.
- Do not stand or sit downwind of generator exhaust. If you can smell exhaust, you are inhaling it. Exhaust is toxic and can be deadly.
- Working CO alarms should be installed in central locations on every level of your home, including basements, and outside sleeping areas to provide early warning of carbon monoxide.

About Stationary Generators

Stationary generators have some differences compared to portable generators. They are also known as standby generators or whole house generators, and are permanently installed by a licensed professional. Please contact your local jurisdiction for more information.

For additional safety inspection information on generator tips, please contact your local fire department, or this office at (603) 223-4289 or fmo@dos.nh.gov.

