

Portable Generator Safety



Portable generators can provide a good, temporary source of power during storm-induced electrical outages, but can become deadly if improperly installed or operated. Taking a few simple precautions can keep you and your family safe from the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning and electric shock resulting from the improper use of portable generators:

Generator Installation Safety Tips:

- ESFI strongly recommends that a **licensed electrician** install home generators to ensure they meet all local electrical codes.
- Do not connect generators directly to the household wiring 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 utility lineworkers making repairs.
- Make sure your generator is **properly grounded**. Use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to prevent electrocutions and electrical shock injuries. Portable GFCIs require no tools to install and are available at prices ranging from \$12 to \$30.



Using Your Generator Safely:

- Make sure your home is equipped with a battery-operated or battery back-up **carbon monoxide alarm**.
- **Never operate a generator inside your home** or in other enclosed or partially-enclosed spaces. Generators can very quickly produce high levels of carbon monoxide (CO), which can be deadly.
- Opening doors and windows or operating fans to attempt to ventilate a generator **will not prevent carbon monoxide build-up** in the home. Even with a working CO alarm, you should never use a gasoline-powered generator inside your home or in a garage.
- ESFI recommends positioning the generator at least **25 feet outside the home** and **away from doors, windows and vents** that can allow CO to enter.
- **Carbon Monoxide is the "silent killer."** Don't take chances. Get to fresh air right away if you feel dizzy or weak.
- Do not **overload** the generator.



- Do not use a generator in **wet conditions**.
- Plug appliances **directly** into the generator or use a heavy-duty, outdoor rated extension cord.
- Make sure extension cords used with generators are **rated for the load** and have **three-pronged plugs**. They should be **inspected for damage**, such as cuts and/or worn insulation before use.
- **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.
- **Keep children away** from portable generators at all times.
- A generator is a **temporary power source**. Use a generator only when necessary to power essential equipment or appliances.
- Warn those in your home **not to open windows or leave doors open** while a generator is operating outside.

