

HOW TO USE YOUR PORTABLE GENERATOR SAFELY



Portable generators can be used to operate equipment during power outages. Use your generator in keeping with the manufacturer instructions and follow these safety tips to use your portable generator safely.

1

Purchase a generator that is rated for the amount of power you will need. If you cannot determine the amount of power you will need, ask a licensed electrician to assist you.

2

Store your generator indoors and pull it out when needed. This will protect the generator from bad weather and keep it secured while not being used.

3

Use your generator outdoors and away from buildings so Carbon Monoxide (CO) gas does not build up or enter buildings and cause CO poisoning.



4

Before starting your generator, check the fuel, fluids, and air filter. Make sure the generator's circuit breaker is turned off and nothing is plugged into your generator.



Run your generator for several minutes to warm up, and then turn on the circuit breaker and connect devices to your generator according to the manufacturer's instructions.



5

Never attach a generator directly to the electrical system of a structure unless the generator has a properly installed transfer switch. This reduces the risk of electrocution.

6

Never refuel your generator while it is running. Turn it off and let it cool before refueling.



7

Store fuel in approved fuel containers where children cannot access them.

8

Based on their age, teach children how to properly use and interact with generators.



9

Keep a fire extinguisher that is rated for the types of fire hazards near your generator. Inspect the fire extinguisher annually and keep an up-to-date inspection tag fastened to each fire extinguisher showing the annual inspection was completed.

10

Inspect your generator regularly. Include generator maintenance in your seasonal maintenance schedule.

SOURCES:

- William H. Ramage, Senior Electrical Designer, Paragon Engineering Services, peservices.org
- Wiki How: How to Use a Generator, <http://www.wikihow.com/Use-a-Generator>
- American Red Cross: How to Choose a Generator, <http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/power-outage/safe-generator-use>
- United States Department of Labor: OSHA, https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/portable_generators.pdf
- United States Department of Labor: OSHA, <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.152>