

Portable generators are commonly used during power outages but they are hazardous and too often deadly when not properly installed. Hazards include carbon monoxide poisoning (a result of toxic exhaust), fire, electrical shock and electrocution.

*Follow the instructions that come with your generator.*

## Carbon Monoxide

Generators produce high levels of carbon monoxide quickly. Carbon monoxide is a highly poisonous gas - colorless, odorless, tasteless and non-irritating - and the symptoms it produces are similar to flu:

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Sleepiness
- Redness of the skin
- Tightness of the chest
- Fluttering of the heart
- Loss of muscle control



**NEVER** use it indoors or in partially enclosed areas like garages, basements, crawl spaces and porches - even if ventilated with windows open or fans in use. Opening doors/windows and using fans will not prevent carbon monoxide from building up. Make sure the generator has enough air to breathe and that its exhaust is vented properly. Locate your generator outside in a secure place to deter theft, but not inside the house, an attached garage or near an open window.

If you feel sick while using a generator, get to fresh air immediately. Call 911 if you need medical attention and let medical personnel know that you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning. Call the fire department or your utility company to check your house before re-entering.

## Electrical and Fire Hazards

If possible, locate the generator close to where electric service connects to your house. Consult your city, town or village to find out if you need a permit, or if there are other requirements.

- A licensed electrician should install a permanently-wired generator.
- Keep the generator dry and do not use it in the rain or in wet conditions (like a flooded basement).
- Plug appliances directly into the generator or use a heavy duty, outdoor-rated extension cord that is free of cuts or tears. Make sure the cord is rated (in watts or amps) to at least equal the sum of the connected appliance load.

• **Never** power the house wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet. This is called "back feeding" and is extremely dangerous. It by-passes some of the built-in household circuit protection and causes a risk of electrocution to utility workers and neighbors served by the same utility. Before operating the generator make sure your wiring system is disconnected from the main electric system by shutting OFF the main circuit breaker in your electric panel box. In older panel boxes, remove the main fuse block.



- To install a generator permanently, have a licensed electrician install a double throw switch. It allows you to connect the generator safely.
- Before refueling the generator, turn it off and let it cool down.
- Never store fuel for your generator inside your home, or near a fuel-burning appliance such as a natural gas water heater. Store all fuels (gasoline, propane, kerosene, other flammable liquids) outside living areas. Make sure the container for the fuel is well sealed and in a non-glass safety container.