



USING YOUR GENERATOR SAFELY

Backup electric generators can be a valuable part of your emergency preparedness plan when a power outage occurs. Power outages are common during disasters and are happening more frequently now due to Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS). Power outages can last hours or several days. Having a portable backup generator can help turn the lights back on, keep appliances running, and power essential equipment and electronic devices. Portable generators do not require permits unless you plan on wiring them directly into your electrical panel. This should only be done by a professional electrician.

- **DO NOT plug the generator into a wall outlet.** **NEVER** try to power your house/business by plugging the generator into a wall outlet or the main electrical panel. This can be extremely dangerous for you, your neighbors, and utility workers who may be working on power lines. Only a licensed electrician should connect a generator to a main electrical panel by installing the proper equipment according to local electrical codes.
- **Position generators outdoors and well away from any structure.** Running a generator inside any enclosed or partially enclosed structure can lead to dangerous and often fatal levels of carbon monoxide. Keep generators positioned outside and at least 15 feet away from open windows so exhaust does not enter your home/business or a neighboring home/business.



- **Keep the generator dry.** Operate your generator on a dry surface under an open, canopy-like structure and make sure your hands are dry before touching the generator. Do not use the generator in rainy or wet conditions.
- **Store fuel safely in a proper container.** Store away from the reach of children or heat sources. Make sure you maintain an adequate supply.
- **Plug equipment directly into the generator.** Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords that are in good working condition and have a wire gauge that can handle the electric load of any connected appliances.
- **Test your generator.** Running your generator periodically and treating the fuel with an approved fuel stabilizer will ensure the fuel doesn't degrade while stored and the generator will run properly when you need it the most.
- **Turn off the generator for at least five minutes before fueling to avoid fires.** Gasoline and its vapors can catch fire if they come in contact with an electric spark.
- **Read all manufacturer instructions.** Follow instructions to ensure your generator is grounded correctly. Be sure it is installed in an area that is not at risk of flooding.