

Generators Help Homeowners Battle The Elements

(NAPSA)—It's summertime and the livin' is easy—except when summer storms roll in. As the country moves into summer storm season, homeowners assess the safety of their homes—inside and out—and determine what measures to take.

As homeowners can attest, power outages are one of the most common and costly effects of summer storms. Each year, storm-related power outages affect more than 20 million U.S. homes (according to Esource.com). In 2001, summer storms and their accompanying power outages caused more than \$700 million of damage.

For example, a sump pump without power can lead to a flooded basement. In 2000, the average claim paid for basement flood damage under the National Flood Insurance Program was \$15,000. Power outages also can shut down furnaces, well pumps, electronics, security systems and air conditioning, as well as spoil food stored in the refrigerator and freezer.

Due, in part, to increased power outages and reliance on computers, standby power generator sales have doubled in the last five years. According to Briggs & Stratton, which manufactures small engines for outdoor power equipment and generators, each year more and more home and small business owners are decreasing and preventing the costs, inconvenience and headaches associated with power outages by utilizing standby generators.

"Standby generators help homeowners prevent costly damages that often accompany power



Summer storms cause several hundred million dollars in damage to property and forests annually.

outages," says Pat Simpson, HGTV host and Briggs & Stratton spokesperson. "A generator can pay for itself through just one major storm by protecting a household from outage-related damages."

Generating Relief

A generator can power lights, refrigerators, furnaces, well pumps, televisions, radios, and other devices needed during an emergency. It also can keep a home-based business fully functional until utility power is restored.

"They're really a tangible form of 'insurance' for homeowners," Simpson says. "Generators will also be valuable a few months from now, when colder weather causes furnace shutdowns."

Standby generators fall into two major categories: portable and permanent. Portable generators are smaller, gasoline-fueled, manually started models that can power necessary household items. The wattage range of these units runs from 4,000 to 10,000 watts. An important accessory for portable units is a Manual Power Transfer System, which eliminates the need for extension cords and

makes transferring standby power to a home fast, safe and easy.

Permanent standby units can sense a power disruption and automatically start even if no one is home, then shut off automatically when the power is restored. These units connect directly to the home's natural gas supply or a propane fuel supply and range from 5,000 to 20,000 watts.

Three Important Tips

Here are three tips Simpson gives for selecting the right standby generator to meet individual needs:

1. Determine the type of generator: The first thing to consider is budget. A portable generator will cost \$500 to \$1,000. Permanent standby systems will run \$5,000 to \$10,000 installed, but provide a level of performance and convenience that is critical for some owners.

2. Determine wattage requirements: Size your unit for the items you'll need during an outage: air conditioner, refrigerator, freezer, lights, TV, computer, well and sump pumps, and others. Approximately 5,000 to 7,500 watts is enough to power the essentials in an average home.

3. Choose your features: Some generator manufacturers include features such as larger fuel tanks for longer run-time and automatic voltage regulation to protect sensitive electronic equipment. A familiar engine brand may be the most important consideration in choosing a generator.

For more information about selecting and operating a standby generator visit www.briggsandstratton.com/generators or call 866-GEN-SETS.