

Hints For Homeowners

Safe Ways To Generate Power During An Outage

(NAPSA)—Portable generators can be a powerful tool during a natural disaster or emergency. However, they can also be dangerous—even deadly—if not installed and operated safely.

That's the word from experts who say safety hazards include carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, electric shock or electrocution, and fires. There were 542 generator-related CO deaths between 1999 and 2009, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Eighty-five percent of these deaths occurred in and around the home.

To help keep you and your family safe from generator-related hazards, here are some tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI):

- ESFI recommends that generators be installed by qualified, licensed electricians.

- Do not connect a generator directly to household wiring without the use of a transfer switch that keeps power from back-feeding into the power lines.

- Make sure your home has either a battery-operated or battery backup CO alarm. Test the batteries monthly.

- Never operate a generator inside your home or in any other even partially enclosed space. Opening doors and windows or using fans for ventilation will not prevent CO from building up.

- Locate the generator as far from the house as possible, away from doors, windows and vents. Keep the generator a safe distance from your neighbors' homes as well.

- Do not operate the generator in wet conditions or where there is



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standing water. Use the generator on a dry surface under an open, canopy-like structure.

- Make sure not to overload the generator. Keep the electrical load to no more than the generator's recommended wattage.

- Plug appliances directly into the generator or use a heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cord.

- Turn off all appliances powered by the generator before shutting it down.

- Always turn the generator off and let it cool down before adding more fuel.

- Keep children away from generators at all times.

- Remember that a generator is a temporary power source. Use it only when necessary to power essential equipment or appliances.

Understanding the dangers associated with portable generators and practicing good safety habits could save your life. For more information about electrical safety during storms and natural disasters, visit www.electrical-safety.org.