

MSU-ES Dawg Tracks



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Safety Tips: Portable Generator Safety



Portable generators are handy machines and are very useful in lots of areas. In inclement weather situations or weather emergencies, they can restore life. As good as they are in emergency use or in other avenues of use, there is a certain amount of safety involved that requires care and planning.

- One must read the manufacturer's instructions through very thoroughly. This will enable you to operate the machine more effectively, more safely and with overall fewer mistakes.
- Keep the generator away from open windows to avoid allowing deadly exhaust to enter your home, business or shop.
- Always be considerate of your neighbors, especially if they live close to you. The sound of the generator may not be as pleasant to them as to you.

Don't ever trust your senses for protection from carbon monoxide. It is a deadly gas that is odorless and invisible. When you purchase a portable generator, purchase a battery-operated carbon monoxide alarm. It works just like a smoke alarm; if the carbon monoxide level gets to a dangerous level, the alarm will sound.

HOW TO USE A PORTABLE GENERATOR-

As previously mentioned, portable generators produce deadly carbon monoxide fumes, so:

- Always run the generator outside the home.
- Never run the generator inside a garage or any building.
- Keep generators away from open windows, as previously noted, because the deadly gases may circulate into the home or building structure.
- Never connect a generator directly into home wiring. Power from a generator connected to a home's wiring can "back feed" into utility lines, potentially injuring severely or killing a neighbor or utility crew working to restore power in the area.
- Plug appliances directly into the generator outlet.
- Use a heavy-duty extension cord rated for outdoor use to keep the generator safely outdoors. If the appliance has a ground plug, then use an extension cord with a ground prong.

- Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for grounding the generator.
- An alternative using extension cords is to hire an electrician to connect your generator to your house wiring using a "listed" (approved) transfer switch. By using this method, it will safely prevent the generator from back feeding through utility lines, avoiding safety hazards to you, your family, neighbors, and utility workers. It will also prevent possible damage to your generator when regular power is restored.

WHAT WILL A SMALL GENERATOR RUN?

- ✓ A small generator, about 3,000 watts can run a few lights, fan, and a refrigerator. If you use it for one appliance at a time, it can run a half-horse pump or a small window air conditioner of about 5,000 BTUs.
- ✓ Each generator has a rated wattage, which provides a limit on the appliances it will safely power.
- ✓ Follow the manufacturer's instruction for the proper use and capacity. Overloading the generator can result in damages to the appliances that it is powering.

Remember – you don't need to run all appliances at the same time. Rotate them one at a time. This saves fuel and increases the life of the machine.

GETTING READY FOR THE STORM SEASON-

- Early spring – Remove the generator from storage, drain the fuel tank, check all lines for cracks, abrasions, etc. and replace if necessary. Refuel the tank and run the generator for a few minutes. Get a small appliance and plug into the generator to make sure that it is working properly.
- Never refuel a hot generator; hot engine parts or exhaust can cause an ignition of the gasoline.
- Turn off all connected appliances before starting the generator.
- Never leave the generator running attended - turn it off each night.

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Excerpts: www.fpl.com/storm/generator_safety
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