

# PORTABLE GENERATOR SAFETY TIPS

Portable generators are often used during prolonged power outages. These types of generators are not made for extended use. They should only be used when absolutely necessary and for short periods of time. The following tips provide guidelines for the safe use of portable generators, in the event of a power outage:

1. **NEVER run extension cords across driveways or streets**

The amount of electricity produced by the generators is the same as that produced by the power companies. This means the electricity running through the extension cords that are connected to the portable generator is as powerful and dangerous as that in the overhead power lines. Vehicles running across the cords will break down the protective insulation and cut into the outer cover, exposing the copper wires that carry the electrical currents. This creates the same deadly conditions as a downed power line. Children riding bicycles or skateboards could easily be electrocuted should they come in contact with the exposed wires.

2. **Place generators in an area that has ample ventilation**

The gasoline powered engine on the generator produces large amounts of deadly carbon monoxide gas. This is an odorless and colorless gas. When inhaled over a short period of time, it will displace the oxygen in your body causing suffocation. This is why generators should never be placed inside or in areas where the exhaust will travel into your homes.

3. **Store gasoline outside and away from the generator**

The gasoline used to power the generator must be stored outside and far away from the generator as possible and away from any source of ignition. A cup of gasoline has the same explosive power as several sticks of dynamite, and one gallon of gasoline could cause extensive damage. Gasoline vapors are heavier than air and will float along the ground. For this reason, generators and gasoline containers should be kept far away from water heaters or any other ignition source.

4. **Never fuel the generator while it is running**

If gasoline comes in contact with a hot engine or exhaust muffler, it could ignite the gasoline vapors which in turn would travel into the gas container in your hand. The resulting explosion would be deadly. Make absolutely sure the generator is cool before adding any fuel.

5. **Use heavy gauge extension cords**

Extension cords should be as heavy a gauge as possible. The wires inside small orange or brown household extension cords are typically not made to carry large amounts of current. Local home improvement stores usually sell heavy gauge extension cords that are designed to carry such electrical loads.