

Portable generator safety

Winter usually finds us preparing for severe weather. Portable electric generators provide a good source of power, but if not installed or operated properly, can become deadly. Here are some precautions for safe generator use:



- Contact a licensed electrician to install your generator and make sure your electrician installs a double-pole, double-throw switch. Do not connect generators directly to household wiring. **Power from generators can backfeed along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including line-workers making repairs.**
 - Make sure your generator is properly grounded.
 - Keep the generator dry.
 - Make sure extension cords used with generators are rated for the load, are free of cuts and worn insulation and have three-pronged plugs.
 - Do not overload the generator. A portable generator should be used only when necessary, and only to power essential equipment or appliances.
 - Never operate the generator in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. Generators can produce high levels of carbon monoxide very quickly, which can be deadly.

- Use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to help prevent electrocutions and electrical shock injuries.
- Make sure fuel for the generator is stored safely, away from living areas, in properly labeled containers, and away from fuel-burning appliances. Before refueling, always turn the generator off and let it cool down.
- Turn off all appliances powered by the generator before shutting down the generator.
- Keep children away from portable generators at all times.

A generator can help you weather some unexpected power outages, but use it carefully and do *your* part to keep *others* safe. For much more on electrical safety visit the Electrical Safety Foundation International website at www.esfi.org.

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TELEPHONE NUMBERS TO CALL IN CASE OF POWER INTERRUPTIONS:

Outage Hotlines

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Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Your heat pump can use 10 percent to 25 percent more energy if it's not properly maintained, which includes regularly checking and replacing the air filter when it's dirty to keep parts from working too hard or even becoming damaged. Keep brush and plants tidy around the outdoor unit, and dust the return registers inside. For more details on heat pump maintenance, visit EnergySavers.gov.

—Source: U.S. Department of Energy