



# Generator Use and Safety Reminders



*If you are using a portable power generator, thoroughly read and follow all manufacturers' instructions, and keep these safety tips in mind:*

- Understand the primary hazards to avoid when using a generator—carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from the toxic engine exhaust, electric shock/electrocution, and fire.
- Use gas-powered generators only in well-ventilated outdoor areas. Always operate the generator outdoors and away from open windows and doors -- NEVER operate it inside, including in a basement, enclosed patio, or garage.
- Keep the generator dry to avoid electrocution.
- Plug appliances directly into the generator, or use a heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cord rated (in watts or amps) at least equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads. Check that the entire cord is free of cuts or tears and that the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin.
- Only connect individual appliances to portable generators and never plug a generator into wall outlets. Plugging generators into the home's electrical system can feed electricity back into the power lines. Known as "backfeeding," this practice puts utility workers, your neighbors, and your family at risk of electrocution.
- Turn the generator off and let it cool down before refueling. Gasoline spilled on hot engine parts could ignite.
- Store fuel for the generator in an approved safety can. Use the fuel type recommended in the instructions or on the generator label.
- Ask your local fire department if local laws restrict the amount of fuel you may store at your location. Store the fuel outside of living areas in a locked shed or another protected area. To guard against accidental fire, do not store it near a fuel-burning appliance, such as a natural gas water heater in a garage.
- Before the start of hurricane season, be sure to start your generator to ensure it is working properly.