

## Protect Yourself Portable Generator Safety

Portable generators are internal combustion engines used to generate electricity and are commonly used during disaster response. Portable generators can be dangerous if used incorrectly.

### Major Causes of Injuries and Fatalities

- Shocks and electrocution from improper use of power or accidentally energizing other electrical systems.
- Carbon monoxide from a generator's exhaust.
- Fires from improperly refueling the generator or inappropriately storing fuel.

### Safe Work Practices

- Inspect portable generators for damage or loose fuel lines that may have occurred during transportation and/or handling.
- Keep the generator dry.
- Maintain and operate portable generators according to the manufacturer's use and safety instructions.
- **Never attach a generator directly to the electrical system of a structure** (home, office or trailer) unless the generator has a properly installed transfer switch because this creates a risk of electrocution for utility workers.
- Always plug electrical appliances directly into the generator using the manufacturer's supplied cords. Use undamaged heavy-duty extension cords that are grounded (3-pronged).
- Use ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) as per the manufacturer's instructions.
- Before refueling, shut down the generator. Never store fuel indoors.

### Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, toxic gas. Many workers have died from CO poisoning because their generator was not adequately ventilated.

- **Never use a generator indoors.**
- **Never place a generator outdoors near doors, windows, or vents.**
- **If you or others show symptoms of CO poisoning—dizziness, headaches, nausea, tiredness—get to fresh air immediately and seek medical attention.**



U.S. Department of Labor

For more information:

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