

7 Safety Tips to Prepare Your Family for the Unexpected

(Family Features) When weather or other unforeseen circumstances cause a power outage, a portable generator may be the perfect solution. Although there are many benefits to using a generator as a temporary power source, some may be unaware of the dangers.



Part of being prepared for an emergency is having a portable generator to supply power in the event of an outage. Many homeowners opt for portable generators when temporary or remote electric power is not readily available. They provide flexibility, convenience, and the ability to power lights and comfort devices, such as fans or space heaters, when the power goes out.

While taking advantage of these benefits, users need to exercise caution to avoid a serious risk associated with misuse of portable generators: carbon monoxide poisoning. Contained in toxic engine exhaust, carbon monoxide is tasteless, colorless and odorless. Unfortunately, it also can be deadly.

That's why the Portable Generator Manufacturers' Association (PGMA) recommends you take time to become familiar with your generator and all of its safety operation instructions, as well as warnings about potential hazards. Keep the operator's manual in a safe place so you can refer to it easily, and always keep these safety tips in mind:

1. Read and follow the operator's manual before starting the generator.
2. Never run a portable generator indoors or in partially-enclosed spaces, even if you plan to use fans or open doors or windows for ventilation.
3. Always take your portable generator outside, placing it downwind with the engine exhaust pointed away from occupied spaces.
4. Avoid placing a portable generator near windows, doors or vents, as carbon monoxide gas can accumulate and potentially be drawn indoors.
5. Install battery-operated carbon monoxide alarms according to manufacturer's instructions. Replace batteries and test the alarm regularly to ensure it is in good working condition.
6. Know how to recognize the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning: headache, nausea, dizziness, shortness of breath, weakness and fainting.
7. If you feel sick, dizzy or weak while using your portable generator, get to fresh air immediately and call 911 for emergency medical attention.

For more information about how portable generators can provide a safe solution to your power emergencies, visit www.pgmaonline.com.

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