

A generator is something everyone should keep in their home or workplace in case of a disaster. It can keep the lights and fans running as well as other important necessities such as: refrigerators, freezers, microwaves, stoves, security alarm systems, garage door openers, air conditioners, washer and dryers, televisions and DVD players, gaming equipment and computers. After a disaster, a generator can be used to run your outdoor power equipment when cleanup is needed. There are two types of generators to be put into consideration: *portable and standby*.

- **Standby generators** are for people who experience long power outages or have special requirements for continuous power. These can provide anywhere from 10 to 30 kilowatts.
- **Portable generators** (pictured below) can be easily stored and cost around \$350 or more. They run off a gasoline engine and can power a limited amount of appliances using extension cords. These types of generators provide 2 to 8 kilowatts, which is about 8 to 12 hours of power.

Source: Lowe's



Generator Safety Tips

Having a portable generator can make the days after a storm much more bearable. However, they can be hazardous. Generator safety and proper handling is imperative for everyone who operates one. Because it runs on gas, (which can cause carbon monoxide poisoning) always remember to never operate a generator indoors, whether it's in your home, garage, basement, or other enclosed or partially enclosed areas. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that can be deadly. It is also important not to install the generator beside your home, or in your garage or carport because the carbon monoxide can accumulate in the attic or extra roof space of your home. Be sure to keep the generator dry. Only operate it on a dry surface under an open, canopy-like structure. Before touching the generator make sure your hands are dry.

Before refilling the gas tank, turn it off and let it cool. It should not be refilled while the generator is running. Fuel spilled on hot engine parts could ignite and cause a fire. Check your oil every time you run it with fuel and store any extra fuel away from any fuel-burning appliances.

Plug appliances directly into a generator starting with the largest electric appliance first, then plug in other items, one at a time or use a heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cord. Make sure the entire extension cord is free of cuts or tears and the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin. Grounding the generator is recommended to help prevent accidental electrical shock. NEVER plug the generator into a wall outlet. The only

safe way to connect a generator to house wiring is to have a qualified electrician install a power transfer switch.

Items you will need to operate a generator:

1 CO detector
This will protect you from any possible exposure to carbon monoxide fumes while the portable generator is in use. The price range starts at about \$20 to protect different rooms in your home.

2 Gas cans
In order to run a generator you must put gas in it. It is also a good idea to have some extra cans so you don't run out of gas for your generator.

3 Inverters
With this continuous source of backup power, you are able to maintain power to your home from your car.

4 Extension cords
You should always have this in your home because it can be used for a wide variety of household operations. Heavy duty 12 or 14-gauge grounded (3-prong) or GFCI work great with the operation of a generator.

5 Fuel stabilizers and lubricants
The stabilizer is used to prevent stale gas from forming due to a long storage period. It is best to change the oil after the first five hours of operation, then after every 50 hours of use.

According to the Consumer Products Safety Commission, 28 people died from carbon monoxide poisoning associated with portable generators after Hurricane Katrina.