

# Safe Use of Generators

## A few safety tips ...

During a power outage, a home generator can be a good back-up option, as long as it is used safely. Back-up generators are also important to those that depend on medical life-support equipment.

Before using any generator, be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's instructions and consider the following tips:

- **Operate generators outside (especially for gas-powered generators)** - Position them in a well-ventilated area away from doors, windows and garages to avoid the potential for carbon monoxide entering your home.
- **Use only outdoor-rated, grounded extension cords** - Look for extension cords with a GFCI (ground-fault circuit interrupter) to avoid getting shocked if cords get wet.



- **Never "back feed"** - Only connect individual appliances to the receptacle of the generator and follow the owner's manual instructions. Do not rig an extension cord to plug a generator into a regular household outlet to try and power the whole house. It could ruin your home's wiring, start a fire and back-feed electricity into the utility system and energize a line thought to be without power. A utility employee could be seriously injured or killed, not knowing the line is live.
- **Prevent "back-feed" with a transfer switch** - The installation of a transfer switch safely allows the home's wiring system to be easily and cleanly detached from the GRPUC system and allows you to control the flow of electricity to those circuits you need most until power is restored - such as your refrigerator or furnace fan. Transfer switches require installation by a licensed electrician.
- **Avoid overload** - Don't overload your generator with too many appliances and equipment. Read and follow wattage guidelines in your owner's manual.
- **Keep children and pets safe** - Keep children and pets away from portable generators at all times.
- **Turn it off safely** - Before shutting down the generator, turn off all equipment being powered by the generator.

### ABOUT PERMANENT GENERATORS:

- Some homes and businesses have a permanent auxiliary generator installed that can be automatically started in the event of a power failure.
- Contact a licensed electrician to ensure that they meet current electric codes and have a transfer switch to prevent dangerous back-feed of electricity into power lines.



*Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission (GRPUC) is a municipal utility established by the City of Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Utilities under the jurisdiction of the GRPUC include electric distribution, water treatment and distribution, and wastewater collection and treatment.*

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