



Portable Generator Safety Tips

Portable generators are useful when temporary or remote electric power is needed, but they are hazardous when used improperly. The primary hazards to avoid when using a generator are carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from the toxic engine exhaust, electric shock or electrocution, and fire from fuels.

Carbon Monoxide Hazards



NEVER use a generator in enclosed or partially-enclosed spaces. Generators can produce high levels of carbon monoxide (CO) very quickly. When you use a portable generator, remember that you cannot smell or see CO. Even if you can't smell exhaust fumes, you may still be exposed to CO.

If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak while using a generator, get to fresh air **RIGHT AWAY. DO NOT DELAY.** The CO from generators can rapidly lead to full incapacitation and death. If you continue to have these symptoms, get medical attention immediately. Inform medical staff that CO poisoning is suspected.

Follow these safety tips to protect against carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning:

- **NEVER** use a generator indoors including in homes, garages, basements, crawl spaces, and other enclosed or partially-enclosed areas, even with ventilation. Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent CO build-up in the home.
- Follow the safety instructions that come with your generator. Locate the unit outdoors and away (downwind) from doors, windows, and vents that could allow CO to come indoors.
- Install battery-operated CO alarms or plug-in CO alarms with battery back-up in your home, according to the manufacturer's installation instructions. The CO alarms should be certified to the requirements of the latest safety standards for CO alarms (UL 2034, IAS 6-96, or CSA 6.19.01).
- Test your CO alarms frequently and replace dead batteries.