



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY

John J. Barthelmes, Commissioner

Division of Fire Safety

Office of the State Fire Marshal

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TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964 ARSON HOTLINE 1-800-400-3526

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Informational Bulletin 2016-02
Portable Generator Safety

Purpose:

This informational bulletin was designed to provide valuable information about portable generator safety during periods of power outages. Improper generator use can lead to serious injuries and death. Accidental fires from improper refueling methods, electrical hazards due to improper wiring, and carbon monoxide poisoning from generator exhaust are just a few of the hazards associated with generator use.

Portable Generator – Safety Guidelines

Always read, follow and maintain the generator according to the manufacturer’s operating instructions.

Portable generators should be placed **at least 10 feet from any structure**, with the exhaust facing away from the building openings. Deadly exhaust fumes can enter the building through any opening resulting in severe injury or death to unsuspecting occupants. Always use a battery-powered Carbon Monoxide Detector inside your home during a power outage.

Never place portable generators on or near combustible surfaces such as decks, porches, or tool sheds. Heat generated by the motor, or improper refueling methods can start a fire.

Never run portable generators **inside any building**, including basement areas and garages. Deadly levels of carbon monoxide can build up in minutes injuring occupants with little to no warning.

Allow plenty of time to cool the generator before refueling. Gasoline vapors can easily ignite from hot surfaces causing a flash fire and severe injuries.

Always store approved gasoline containers a safe distance from generators while in use. Always store gasoline in approved containers and placed in a well-ventilated storage area. Never store gasoline products in basements or enclosed areas of your dwelling.



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Never modify or construct any power cord so a generator can be connected to a receptacle, dryer or range outlet.

Never connect a generator directly to panelboard without a means to prevent inadvertent connection to the normal supply system wiring. Connecting a generator directly to an electrical outlet or to a panelboard without a transfer switch or an interlocking device could result in a situation where power from the generator could energize the utility's wiring (back feeds into the utility system). Electrical power from a generator back fed through your meter into the utility system can cause fires, serious injury or death to utility workers trying to repair the lines in the street, or electricians working on nearby property's electrical systems.

Always make sure your home and family are prepared and protected from storm damage by visiting: <http://www.readynh.gov>

For additional safety inspection information or generator tips, please contact your local Fire Department or this office at (603) 223-4289 or fmo@dos.nh.gov