

Portable Generators – Important Considerations for Today’s Homeowner

Portable power generators have skyrocketed in popularity – and for good reason. A portable generator can be an invaluable tool during an electrical outage. They also provide homeowners incredible versatility because they can be utilized in a wide variety of settings – from camping and tailgating to worksites and many other situations where temporary power is needed.

At home, portable generators can be incredibly helpful during an outage and can be used to keep critical appliances, such as a refrigerator, sump pump, lights, radios and handheld electronics, up and running until utility power is restored.

To help maximize performance and safety any time a portable generator is used, homeowners should keep the following considerations in mind:

- Find a safe, dry spot outside of your home to operate the unit. Make sure it’s at least ten feet away from doors and windows and vented away from the house. Never run a generator in an enclosed area such as an attached garage or even a screened-in porch.
- Install battery-operated CO alarms or plug-in CO alarms with battery back-up in your home, according to the manufacturer’s installation instructions.
- Never try to power the house by plugging the generator into a wall outlet. Hire a professional electrician if you’re planning to hardwire a portable generator into your electrical panel. This will alleviate potential back feeding and help keep utility workers safe.
- Have plenty of extension cords available and make sure they have a grounding pin and are properly rated for outdoor use as well as the appropriate electrical load.
- Keep an extra supply of fresh fuel on hand – as well as oil and air filters – to help keep the unit performing during a prolonged outage. Store fuel for the generator in an approved safety can outside of living areas and away from any fuel-burning appliances.
- Always turn off the generator and allow it to cool down before refueling or performing maintenance on the unit.

If you’re looking for a more permanent and “hands-off” power solution for your home, you may want to consider an **automatic standby generator**. A standby generator is permanently installed outside a home, similar to a central air conditioning unit, and runs on natural gas or propane using existing gas lines. When power is lost to the home, a standby generator automatically turns on – typically within 10 seconds – and can power all critical systems and appliances within the home. You don’t need to be present to operate or refuel the generator.

“When looking at our aging national power grid in combination with our society’s growing dependence on technology, every homeowner should have a strategy in place for backup power,” said Melanie Tydrich, Senior Channel Manager for Kohler Generators. “There are many different options available today, so I encourage people to do their homework now, so they’re fully prepared – and operational – when the next outage occurs.”

To learn more about backup power, visit kohlergenerators.com for helpful videos, sizing calculators