



Public Service Commission of West Virginia



Public Service Commission Urges Caution When Using Portable Generators

During weather related power outages, many people rely on portable generators. The Public Service Commission of West Virginia urges all West Virginians to follow safety procedures when operating a portable generator.

Carbon monoxide, which is present in the engine exhaust fumes, but has no smell or taste, is the most common danger from the improper use of portable generators. Exposure to excess levels of this gas can cause serious illness or death in people and animals.

To help you and your family remain safe and comfortable, the Commission offers these guidelines from the Portable Generator Manufacturers Association.

- Always read the operator's manual first and follow the manufacturer's recommended precautions and procedures.
- Never run a portable generator indoors or in partially enclosed spaces, such as garages, porches or breezeways, even if using fans or opening doors and windows for ventilation. Carbon monoxide can build up and linger for hours, even after the generator has shut off.
- Always place a portable generator as far away from doors and windows as possible to prevent emissions from drifting indoors.
- Place the generator downwind and point the engine exhaust away from occupied spaces.
- Install a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector according to manufacturer's instructions and check the battery regularly.
- Avoid having to run cords through windows or doorways by installing a manual transfer switch outside the house to transfer power from the generator to your indoor appliances.
- Get fresh air immediately and call 911 for emergency medical attention if you feel sick, dizzy or weak while using your portable generator.

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