

PLAY IT SAFE: Do's and don'ts when using portable generators

Storm season is upon us, which means greater potential for power outages. If you're planning to use a portable generator in the event of an outage, play it safe with these tips.

DO: Install backup carbon monoxide (CO) alarms. In a 2022 report, the Consumer Product Safety Commission estimated 85 U.S. consumers die every year from CO poisoning caused by gasoline-powered portable generators.

DO: Keep children and pets away from portable generators at all times.

DO: Position generators at least 25 feet outside the home, away from doors, windows and vents that can allow CO to enter the home.

DO: Ensure your generator is properly grounded. Use a portable ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to prevent electric shock injuries.

DO: Use three-pronged extension cords that are rated to handle the load of the generator. Inspect extension cords for cuts, frays or other damage before use.

DON'T: Operate a generator inside your home or a fully or partially enclosed space. Generators produce high levels of CO, which can be deadly.

DON'T: Rely on generators as a full-time source of power. They should only be used temporarily or in emergency situations to power essential equipment or appliances.

DON'T: Overload generators. Make sure your generator can handle the load of the items you plan to power.

DON'T: Connect generators directly into household wiring unless you have an appropriate transfer switch installed. If a generator is connected to a home's wiring without a transfer switch, power can backfeed along power lines and electrocute lineworkers making repairs.



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While generators provide convenience during power outages, they can quickly become hazardous — even deadly — if improperly operated. Before operating a portable generator, thoroughly read the owner's manual for important safety information and tips.

Article contributed by Abby Berry with National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



It's Time to Apply for Youth Tour!

C & L Electric Cooperative will select outstanding high school juniors to attend the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas Youth Tour, an all-expenses-paid educational trip to Washington, D.C., from June 16-22. The winners will be selected through an essay contest. Applicants must be high school juniors, and their parents/guardians must be members of C & L Electric Cooperative.

Students selected to participate will have an opportunity to earn a \$5,000 scholarship.

For more information, contact Karen Rauls at 870-628-4221 ext. 104 or email: KRauls@clelectric.com. **Deadline: Entries must be postmarked by March 17.**