

# THE POWER OF BEING PREPARED



**BACKUP ELECTRIC GENERATORS** can be a valuable part of your emergency preparedness plan when a power outage occurs. They can turn the lights back on, keep appliances running, and power essential equipment and electronic devices. However, generators can also be extremely dangerous. Failure to use your generator correctly could put **you, your family and your property at risk.**

## Backup generators are not connected to the power grid.

Connecting a generator to another power source can damage your appliances, and seriously injure or even kill you. Under the law, it is your responsibility to make sure electricity from your generator does not feed back into power lines.

### SELECTING THE RIGHT GENERATOR

A backup generator is not for everyone. Factors like the noise and cost of owning a generator are important to weigh alongside your electric needs and safety hazards. If you decide to purchase a generator, you must consider:

- **Energy Needs** – Calculate the “constant wattage” needed to power the appliances you wish to operate. If you plan to run large appliances with motors, you’ll need a generator with a surge rating that meets or exceeds the higher “start-up wattage.”
- **Fuel Source** – Depending on your preferences, options include battery, natural gas, gasoline, propane, diesel fuel and solar with back-up storage.
- **Choose a generator rated for more power than you may need.** Some appliances, particularly ones with motors (e.g. refrigerators), may use more power when they first start up. Be aware of these energy loads, their start-up or ‘in-rush’ power requirement and the generator’s ability to meet these demands. This is best determined by an electrician.

### PREPARE FOR AN OUTAGE

Keep your home stocked with:



Nonperishable food



One gallon of water per person per day



Flashlights and batteries

### USING YOUR GENERATOR SAFELY

- **Never try to back-feed your house** by plugging a generator into a wall outlet or temporarily wiring into the electrical panel. This can be extremely dangerous for you, your neighbors and utility workers who may be working on power lines. Electrocution is the fifth leading cause of all reported occupational deaths.
- **Read all manufacturer instructions.** Be sure you can follow them all before using your generator.
- **Follow instructions** to ensure your generator is grounded correctly. Be sure it is installed in an area that is not at risk of flooding.
- Ensure the electric load **never exceeds the manufacturer’s rating.**



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## USING YOUR GENERATOR SAFELY (CONTINUED)

- **Never use a generator inside your home**, garage or other enclosed building. Good ventilation is required because of the carbon monoxide that generators produce.
- **Store fuel safely** in a proper container and away from the reach of children or heat sources.
- **Contact your energy company to inform them if you've installed a backup system.** If you decide to permanently wire a stationary generator directly to your home, California state law mandates that you notify your energy company.
- Running your generator periodically and **treating the fuel with an approved fuel stabilizer** will ensure the fuel doesn't degrade while stored and the generator will run properly when you need it the most.
- **Turn off the generator for at least five minutes before fueling** to avoid fires. Gasoline and its vapors can catch fire if they come in contact with an electric spark.
- Don't run cords under carpets or rugs. **Heat could build up**, or they may become damaged without you noticing.
- **Keep cords out of the way** to avoid tripping hazards. Also make sure the cord has no cuts or tears and is grounded (3-prong plug).
- Choose electric cords that **carry the appropriate electric load** for your generator.
- **Hire a licensed electrician** to help you with back-up solutions. Working with a licensed electrician will ensure the safety of you, your family and utility workers.

### PORTABLE GENERATOR SAFETY



Never run a generator inside your home or garage, even with ventilation. Exhaust fumes can build up and lead to carbon monoxide poisoning, which can cause death.

## LEARN MORE FROM YOUR LOCAL ENERGY COMPANY



[sdge.com/wildfire-safety](https://www.sdge.com/wildfire-safety)



[sce.com/PSPS](https://www.sce.com/PSPS)



[pge.com/wildfiresafety](https://www.pge.com/wildfiresafety)

## Additional Preparedness Resources:

- [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) – Disaster preparedness information from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- [readyforwildfire.org](https://www.readyforwildfire.org) – CAL FIRE's wildfire preparedness website
- [cpuc.ca.gov/wildfiresinfo](https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/wildfiresinfo) – Information on the CPUC's wildfire safety efforts
- [caloes.ca.gov](https://www.caloes.ca.gov) – California Governor's Office of Emergency Services website
- [firesafecouncil.org](https://www.firesafecouncil.org) – California Fire Safe Council website
- [noaa.gov](https://www.noaa.gov) – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website