

News Line

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Portable generator safety tips



Portable generators are useful when temporary or remote electric power is needed, but they can be hazardous. The primary hazards to avoid when using them are electric shock or electrocution, carbon monoxide poisoning and fire.

Make sure the generator you purchase is Underwriters Laboratory (UL) approved, and follow manufacturer's instructions for installation and ventilation. And most important, don't install a standby generator until you call Citizens Electric first!

To avoid electrical hazards:

Choose a model that will accommodate your essential appliances. List all of the appliances that are going to operate at the same time, and determine the starting wattage and the running wattage requirements. The running wattage can be found on the appliance nameplate. Starting wattage is usually two to seven times the running wattage. Do not overload the generator, or it can cause serious damage to your generator or appliances.

Plug appliances directly into the generator or use a heavy-duty outdoor-rated extension cord. Make sure the entire extension cord is free of cuts or tears and the plug has all three prongs, and especially a grounding pin.

Never plug the generator into a wall outlet. This can cause electricity to backfeed along the power lines and electrocute or kill anyone coming in contact with the lines, including neighbors, yourself and line workers making repairs. A qualified licensed electrician must install a double-throw transfer switch in order to connect a generator to house wiring.

Keep the generator dry. To protect it from moisture, operate it on a dry surface under an open canopy-like structure. Dry your hands before touching the generator.

To avoid carbon monoxide poisoning:

Do not operate a generator in a basement, attached garage or any closed area. It should be located in a well-ventilated dry area, away from air intakes to the home. Generators produce high levels of carbon monoxide – a colorless, odorless, deadly gas.

Install battery-operated or plug-in (with battery backup) carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in your home, following manufacturer's instructions. Test CO alarms often and replace batteries when needed.

To avoid fire hazards:

Store fuel only in an approved safety container away from your home and garage in a locked shed or other protected area.

Before refueling the generator, turn it off and let it cool. Fuel spilled on hot engine parts could ignite.

Keep children away from portable generators at all times.

Information for this fact sheet was provided by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

November winner announced

Congratulations to **Ronald Jokerst** who won \$100! Their account was randomly selected from all CEC members who paid on time in November.

Survey Winners Announced

Congratulations to the following members who were randomly selected to win \$50 for their participation in Citizens' member survey: Dale Kreidler, Mary Schlegel, Dean Adelmund, Mary Helen Newell and Randy Statler.

Safely connecting to the power grid

Current federal tax incentives for renewable energy equipment make this an opportune time to “go green.” But before you buy, call Citizens Electric first. Prior written approval is required to interconnect with CEC’s utility system before installing any self-generation equipment (i.e. solar or wind).

CEC is supportive of self generation from renewable resources and will allow members to generate their own electricity under certain guidelines and procedures outlined



in Missouri’s “Net Metering and Easy Connection Act.” However, members must complete CEC’s Application and Agreement for Interconnection and Net Metering which is available upon request or at www.cecmo.com.

Working alongside CEC’s engineering and metering personnel will ensure that the generating system is wired correctly and the appropriate safety devices are installed. This will avoid dangerous backfeeding into the electric distribution system that could risk linemen’s lives and require costly rewiring for the homeowner.

Before you buy, thoroughly research the equipment and feasibility of producing power at your location. Good resources include: Missouri Dept. of Natural Resources, U.S. Dept. of Energy and American Solar Energy Society.

Once the generation equipment is in place, CEC will install net metering at no extra charge. The amount of generation used in the home and delivered back into the power grid is tracked. Members receive a credit for the amount of electricity generated that exceeds their home’s needs. For additional information, call 877-876-3511.

Energy efficiency programs extended

Great news! The energy audit and rebate programs offered in 2010 have been extended into 2011!

Residential energy audits – Eligibility is limited to members who have electric heat or water heating. The cost of the audit is \$200 (if your conditioned living space is 3,000 square feet or less). CEC will reimburse you up to \$200 for energy efficiency improvements made following the audit.

Air-source and ground-source heat pumps – If you are building a new home or converting from less efficient electric heating, you will qualify for a \$125 per ton rebate for a high efficiency air-source heat pump and \$150 per ton for a ground-source heat pump.

Energy Star® certified clothes washer - \$50 rebate available if you have an electric water heater.

Refrigerator Recycling Program - Through a special arrangement with JACO Environmental, they will haul away your extra (working) refrigerator or freezer and send you a check for \$35 once the unit has been recycled. Call 877-395-5537 to schedule a pickup.

For additional information and rebate forms, call 877-876-3511, extension 119, or go to www.cecmo.com.

Priority listing for medical equipment

We need to know if you or someone in your household depends on electricity to operate medical equipment. This includes oxygen units, kidney machines, respirators and other vital life-preserving equipment.

Although CEC cannot guarantee uninterrupted service or restore your power before certain repairs are made, members on life support equipment are given first priority during outage restoration.

In order to be placed on CEC’s Priority List:

1. Supply a letter from the patient’s doctor stating the patient’s name and the type of equipment that is required for the medical condition.
2. Include the name listed on the CEC account, the address and the account number where the equipment is being used.
3. Make sure to have a plan in place, so that the patient can be moved in the event of an extended power outage.

