

Use Generators Safely at Home

Generators provide a temporary source of power during an electric outage. Many Floridians are using portable generators after Hurricane Ian. Residents should be aware of safety concerns.

Hazards

- Carbon monoxide poisoning
- Fire
- Electrocution

Safety Tips

- Read the manufacturer's instructions on how to use the generator.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning
 - Do not assume you are safe. Carbon monoxide from generators is colorless and odorless.
 - Do not use a generator indoors or in partially enclosed spaces including homes, garages and crawl spaces, even those areas with partial ventilation.
 - Do not operate near open doors and windows. Using fans will not prevent carbon monoxide build-up in the home.
 - Install battery-powered carbon monoxide alarms inside your home.
- Electrocution or electric shock
 - Always connect the generator to appliances with heavy-duty extension cords.
 - Hooking up your generator directly into your home power supply could increase the voltage or could cause a surge to the outside power lines and potentially injure or electrocute an unaware utility lineman. It also bypasses some of the built-in household circuit protection devices. Connecting the generator to your home could cause a surge in electricity that might result in injury or death to yourself or your family.
 - Use a qualified electrician to install the appropriate equipment in accordance with local electrical codes or ask your utility company to install an appropriate power transfer switch.



FEMA

- Fire
 - Keep your generator outside and fuel your generator outside.
 - Do not store fuel for your generator in your house.
 - Do not store fuel near a fuel-burning appliance, for example a gas stove.
 - If fuel is spilled or the container is not sealed properly, invisible vapors from the fuel can travel along the ground and be ignited by the appliance's pilot light or by arcs from electric switches.
 - Before refueling the generator, turn it off and let it cool down. Gasoline or other flammable liquids spilled on hot engine parts could ignite, and invisible vapors from the fuel can travel along the ground and be ignited by the generator's pilot light or by arcs from electric switches in the appliance.

Resources for additional information about generators and carbon monoxide:

- Generator safety video from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and FEMA which includes American Sign Language: [youtube.com/watch?v=n7GIQzABRHA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7GIQzABRHA).
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration information about how to use portable generators safely at [osha.gov/OshDoc/data/Hurricane_Facts/portable_generator_safety.pdf](https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data/Hurricane_Facts/portable_generator_safety.pdf).
- CDC carbon monoxide video at [cdc.gov/co/](https://www.cdc.gov/co/) or call 800-232-4636.

For the latest information on Florida's recovery from Hurricane Ian, visit [floridadisaster.org/info](https://www.floridadisaster.org/info) [fema.gov/disaster/4673](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4673). Follow FEMA on Twitter at [FEMA Region 4 \(@femaregion4\) / Twitter](https://twitter.com/femaregion4) and at [facebook.com/fema](https://www.facebook.com/fema).

###