



Portable Generators

A portable generator can be a good temporary power supply for lighting, vital medical equipment, refrigerators, sump pumps and essential appliances — provided it's installed and operated properly. When using a portable generator, it's important to follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid injuring someone or damaging your generator or appliances. Read through these important safety tips and learn how to select, connect and operate a portable generator.

SELECTING A GENERATOR

Determine the "constant wattage."

When you use a portable generator, you can only operate a limited number of appliances and lights. Determine what items you need to operate and add up that wattage. That total is your "constant wattage" – the energy you will constantly need to keep the selected items running. Need help determining the wattage of your appliances? See our wattage reference guide below.

Determine the "start-up wattage."

Motor-driven appliances, such as refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners and furnace blowers require up to three times their normal wattage to start or to periodically cycle a compressor. Choose a generator that meets or exceeds your "constant wattage" needs and that also has a surge rating that meets or exceeds your "start-up wattage" needs.

Match voltage ratings.

The generator's voltage rating must also match the voltage ratings of the items you want to operate. Portable generators may be rated for 120 volts only or a combination of 120 and 240 volts. Most household appliances are rated at 120 volts. Some larger electric appliances, such as ranges, dryers and well pumps, are rated at 240 volts. These appliances cannot be operated on a 120-volt generator.

CONNECTING A GENERATOR

Get some expert advice.

If you purchase a generator, have a qualified electrician properly size and install it. If you install the generator yourself, have a local electrical inspector check the installation for compliance with safety codes. A permit may be required for installation. If you're renting a generator for temporary use, choose equipment that is properly sized for your needs and that comes with complete operating instructions.

Prevent backfeed.

Backfeed occurs when an improperly connected generator begins feeding electricity back into the power lines. Protect repair crews and your neighbors. Backfeed can seriously injure, or even kill. It can also cause damage to

the generator when electric service is restored. To prevent backfeed and operate your generator safely, we recommend you use one of the following hookup methods:

- **Use a transfer switch.** Have a qualified electrician install a transfer switch. This is the best form of protection from backfeed. The transfer switch closes the path of electricity between our lines and your main electrical panel and opens the path between the generator and the panel.
- **Use a direct hookup.** If you do not install a transfer switch, plug the appliances you want to operate directly into the generator. For an extra measure of safety, switch your main fuses or circuit breakers to the "off" position.

WATTAGE REFERENCE GUIDE FOR PORTABLE GENERATORS

APPLIANCE	AVERAGE WATTAGE*
Air Conditioner (6,000 Btu)	750-1,200
Air Conditioner (12,000 Btu)	1,700
Freezer	500
Furnace** (1/3 HP)	1,200
Lamp	Check bulb wattage
Microwave	700
Radio	50-200
Refrigerator**	600
Space Heater	1,300
Sump Pump	250-600
Television	200-500
Window Fan	200

*Appliance wattages vary. These figures represent averages only. **Allow up to three times the normal running watts for starting these appliances or cycling their compressors.



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