

# Follow strict safety guidelines when using generators during emergencies

If an outage leaves you without power for a prolonged period and you opt to use a generator, be sure to follow the manufacturer's guidelines and remember these important safety tips:

- Never operate the generator anywhere inside the house – that includes the garage, a carport or any other confined area.



- Keep the generator at least 10 feet away from the house with its exhaust pointing away from the house. Be mindful of wind direction. Wind can push carbon monoxide into the house. With sustained winds from one direction, you may

need to run the generator downwind of the house, and out of the envelope of low pressure created near the house that can pull exhaust fumes inside.

- Regardless of whether you run a generator, every home should have a working carbon monoxide detector.
- The ideal setup for running a generator is to have an electrician evaluate the house's electrical system for proper grounding and polarity, and then install a generator transfer switch. A homeowner connects the generator to the transfer switch. From there, the generator's power is fed into the house's service panel and to the dedicated

circuits that have been specifically wired to be powered by the generator. The transfer switch also prevents electricity from feeding back into the electrical grid that powers your neighborhood. This protects utility workers from encountering unexpected current coming from your house – a dangerous condition known as backfeed.

- If the scenario above is not workable, you still need to separate the generator from the general power supply. You may use multiple generator extension cords plugged into individual appliances, or use a multihed generator cord. To prevent electrical shock, support the generator cords off the ground or relocate them rather than allowing them to lay in puddles. Likewise, replace any cord with damaged insulation.
- Do not store fuel in the house, and do not fuel the generator while running. Instead, shut the engine off, let it cool then refuel it. While inconvenient, this is far safer than fueling a generator adjacent to its red-hot muffler, especially if you spill a little gasoline (not uncommon, especially at night). Clean up any spilled gas before restarting the generator.

For more safety tips, visit [rockymountainpower.net/safety](http://rockymountainpower.net/safety).



*Let's turn the answers on.*