

What You Need To Know About Portable Generator Use

Anything an individual resident does in a multi-residential occupancy can impact the other residents. This is why there are strict regulations concerning the use of portable electrical generators in multi-residential occupancies. You must check with your building management and/or association as to whether the use of portable generators are allowed.



What is not allowed

Generators are not allowed to be operated in individual dwelling units.

Generators can not be stored inside individual dwelling units.

Generators can not be operated on balconies:

- If it is within 10 feet of any opening into the building.
- If fuel for the operation of the generator must be brought through the dwelling.
- If a spill will run off the balcony or block an exit path.
- If any opening to the inside can not be closed during operation of the generator.

Hazards

Fire or Explosion - can result from spilling gasoline on the engine where a spark or hot surface will ignite the gasoline while filling the gas tank. **Prevention** - use a funnel and spout when filling the tank. Never fill the tank while the generator is running and let stand for at least five minutes to cool down. Eliminate or control all ignition sources where flammable vapors could be present. **Extinguisher** - minimum of one portable extinguisher with a rating of 2-A:10-B:C must be in the immediate vicinity of the generator. **Emergency Plan** - have a plan of what to do in event of a fire.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning (CO) - is a colorless, odorless and tasteless toxic gas that is a by-product of internal combustion engines. All portable generators produce some carbon monoxide. **Prevention** - never use a generator indoors, in an enclosed or partially enclosed area or in the garage area. A carbon monoxide detector should be installed in any room within 10 feet of the generator outside the structure. Remember winds could blow CO into the structure from a greater distance. Remember many CO monitors run off of the house electricity and will need to have a battery backup.

Electrocution - electrical generators produce the same electricity that you have in your house and can cause a severe shock or electrocution. **Prevention** - never plug a portable electric generator into a regular household outlet. Only use the proper rated (UL listed for outdoor use and wattage required) extension cords and plug them directly into the appliance to be used. Extension cords cannot be placed in exit corridors, hallways, or stairwells. Always make sure the generator is properly grounded.

Fuel Spills - provide a safe area for drainage in event of a spill. Ensure adequate ventilation to prevent a buildup of fumes. Don't over-fill tanks and never fill a generator inside.

Electrical Overloads -do not operate more appliances and equipment than your generator output rating.

Handling Gasoline Safely

Gasoline produces fumes or vapors that can travel considerable distances and once they reach an ignition source they will burn furiously or even explode. Gasoline produces these flammable vapors at low temperatures that are easily ignited.

Common ignition sources are: cigarette lighters or matches, pilot light on gas appliance (i.e. hot-water heater), electric heaters, electrical switches (i.e. light switches), static electricity, electric motors, and faulty electric outlet.

Gasoline can only be stored in approved Safety Cans. Plastic containers are not approved.

Approved Safety Cans have a max capacity of 5 gal, spring closing lid, spout cover, red in color and must be labeled as such.



The maximum amount of gas allowed to be stored is two 5 gal Safety Cans.

It can not be stored inside the dwelling unit or any egress pathway (i.e. hallway, corridor, or stairwell).

Post signage "No Smoking or Open Flame" where the gasoline will be stored and used.

Safety Cans stored inside the building must be in a special storage room that has a minimum of a 1 hour fire rating and is protected by an automatic extinguishing system.