

# Understanding how to use a generator safely

Every now and then someone will call Perennial and ask about hooking up a generator. Most of the time it is after a storm.

In this article we want to offer some safety tips on hooking up a generator.

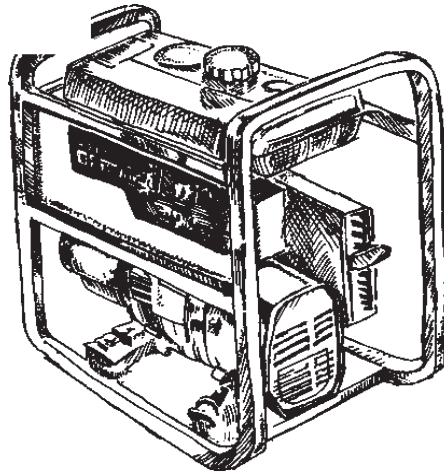
## Standby Generators

Consumers should pay close attention to the following tips if choosing to install and use a portable standby generator:

- ✓ **Only a qualified professional**, such as a licensed electric contractor, should install a permanent standby generator.
- ✓ **A double-pole, double-throw transfer switch is the recommended device** to keep your generator from backfeeding into Perennial's system. The switch also keeps Perennial's power from re-energizing your house wiring while your generator is running, protecting your generator, wiring, and appliances, from damage when your service is restored.
- ✓ **Have all additions to your house wiring inspected** by your city, county or state electrical inspector.
- ✓ **If you already have a permanently installed standby generator but you don't know if it is installed properly, call** your local building inspector or a licensed contractor for help. If you have an older installation, it would be a good idea to have the equipment serviced and checked out before trying to put it into service. Also, cords, cables, and electrical connectors, should be checked for weather, age and other damage.

## Wide Range of Responsibility

You are responsible for any injuries or damage to your property, your neighbor's, or Perennial's, from an improperly installed or operated generator.



## Portable Generators

If you use a portable generator, remember that it is designed to be connected only to selected appliances or lamps. These generators should never be connected to a building's wiring system. If using a portable generator, consumers should observe the following tips:

- ✓ **Before starting your generator**, carefully read and follow all the manufacturer's instructions.
- ✓ **Be sure that the total electric load** won't exceed the manufacturer's rating.
- ✓ **Always locate your generator** where its exhaust will vent safely.
- ✓ **Prioritize your needs.** Use the lowest watt bulbs that provide a safe level of light, reserving power for additional lighting elsewhere or a small appliance. Remember that the greater the load on your generator,

the more fuel it will use.

- ✓ **Keep cords out of the way** so they don't present a tripping hazard especially in dimly lit doorways or halls. Never run cords under rugs or carpets where heat might build up or damage to a cord may go unnoticed.
- ✓ **Extension cords must be properly sized** to carry the electric load. Over loaded cords can overheat and cause fires or damage to equipment.
- ✓ **Never attempt to use a portable generator to power the whole house** by plugging it into a house receptacle with a double male ending plug. If you do, you run the risk of damage to your equipment and appliances. You also potentially place yourself and your family in danger. Plus, you put in harms way any utility service technician working to restore power to your home.

## It's Your Responsibility

### No "Backfeed"

Buying a generator is a personal decision. If you own and operate a generator, you are responsible for making sure that electricity from your unit cannot "backfeed," or flow onto Perennial's or any other utility's power lines.

### Nebraska Law

State law requires that permanently installed or portable generators not be connected to another power source, such as power lines.

For safety's sake, be sure to use your generator correctly. If you don't, you risk damaging your property and endangering your life and the lives of utility workers who may be working on power lines some distance from your home.