

## ***Tip sheet: avoid dangers associated with power generators***

Improper use of power generators can cause carbon monoxide poisoning and create electrical and fire hazards. Prevention tips below:

### **Carbon monoxide poisoning**

- Never use any kind of gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal burning device inside your home or garage.
- Install and test at least one carbon monoxide detector in your home, and check the batteries annually.
- Do not run a car or truck inside an attached garage, even if the door is open.
- Never burn anything in a stove or fireplace that isn't vented.
- Never heat your house with a gas oven.

### **Shock and electrocution**

- Keep the generator dry. Operate it on a dry surface under an open, canopy-like structure. Do not touch the generator with wet hands.
- Plug appliances directly into the generator or use a heavy-duty, outdoor extension cord that is rated, in watts and amps, at least equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads. Be sure there are no cuts or tears on the cord and the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin.
- Never try to power household wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet. This poses an electrocution risk to utility workers and neighbors served by the same utility transformer. It also bypasses built-in household circuit protection devices.
- If you must connect the generator to household wiring, ask a qualified electrician to install equipment in accordance with local electric codes. Or ask the utility company to install a power transfer switch.
- Permanently installed stationary generators are best suited for providing backup power during a power outage. Even a properly connected portable generator can become overloaded, possibly leading to generator failure.

### **Fire**

- Never store generator fuel inside the house. Gasoline, propane, kerosene and other flammable liquids should be stored outside living areas in labeled, non-glass safety containers. Do not store them near a fuel-burning appliance, such as a natural gas water heater in a garage. If fuel is spilled or the container improperly sealed, vapors can travel

- along the ground and be ignited by the appliance's pilot light or by arcs from electric switches in the appliance.
- Turn the generator off and let it cool down before refueling. Gasoline spilled on hot engine parts could ignite.

Additional information is on the Web at [www.cdc.gov/co/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/co/default.htm) and <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/portgen.html>