

Portable Generator Safety

If you use a portable generator during a power outage, please be extremely cautious.

Consumers should be aware that the improper use of these generators can cause serious injury and even death to homeowners and co-op linemen.

If a generator is installed incorrectly, it can injure or kill utility company employees who are trying to restore power.

When a portable generator is hooked up to an electric circuit, the current from the generator could flow out of the home and into the transformer serving that home or business. Once the electricity goes into the transformer, it is stepped up to 13,000 volts and enters the local power distribution system.

Employees working to restore power believe the lines they are working on are de-energized. Without knowing it, an employee can come in contact with a line that has been energized by a portable generator.

To avoid back-feeding of electricity into utility systems, you must have a qualified, licensed electrician install a double-pole, double-throw transfer switch between the generator and utility power in compliance with all state and local electrical codes. (A minimum of 10-gauge wiring must be used.)

Your generator might not be large enough to handle the load of all the lights, appliances, TV, etc. at one time. To prevent dangerous overloading, be sure to calculate wattage requirements correctly.

Choptank Electric offers information and assistance to anyone who may have questions about the installation and use of a portable generator. Co-Op members with concerns about the use of a generator may call the cooperative at 1-877-892-0001.