SAFETY BULLETIN #11

November 16, 2025

Safe Practices - Portable Generators

Safe Operation

When used properly, portable generators are a great option for providing temporary power at our work sites. Reminders for safe operation include:

- ★ Keep generators at least 20’ away from other objects.
- ★ Always direct exhaust away from buildings, trucks, tool trailers, and air intakes. (Carbon monoxide poisoning can kill in as little as 5 minutes.)
- ★ Never operate a generator in an enclosed space - such as a home, garage, shop, or tool/cargo trailer.
- ★ Ensure the generator has 3-4 feet of clear space above and on all sides for proper ventilation.
- ★ Prior to each use, inspect cords, fuel lines, & oil levels.
- ★ Use hearing protection if working near the generator.



Electrical Hazards

- ★ Keep the generator dry; do NOT use it in the rain or wet conditions. If needed, protect the generator with an open-sided canopy.
- ★ Always plug electrical tools directly into the generator or use extension cords that are grounded (3-prong).
- ★ Inspect all extension cords and tool cords for damage. Never use frayed or damaged cords.
- ★ Ensure all extension cords are appropriately rated in watts or amps for the intended use. Do not use underrated cords or overload a generator. This can lead to overheating and potential fire.
- ★ Do NOT use a generator to backfeed power for the jobsite. Generator tie-ins must be done by a qualified electrician.

Proper Refueling

- ★ Before refueling, shut down the generator and allow it to cool.
- ★ Do not leave fuel containers near the generator or other heat sources after refueling.
- ★ Do NOT smoke while refueling or handling fuel containers.

Other Discussion Points:

- ★ Have all the extension cords on your jobsite been inspected for any damage?
- ★ How far away from the tool trailer, trucks, and buildings should a generator be before operating?
- ★ Is operating a generator inside the shop with the doors open allowed? What about in a tool trailer?