

SAFE USE OF PORTABLE STANDBY GENERATORS

MISSISSAUGA, ON – The recent North America-wide power outage has prompted some consumers to consider buying portable standby generators.

Ken Brightwell, electrical safety code technical advisor with the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA), warns that if portable generators are not installed correctly they can create potentially fatal electrical and fire hazards, putting home owners and their families, neighbors and utility workers in danger.

“Our primary concern,” says, Mr. Brightwell, “is the do-it-yourselfers who believe they have some electrical expertise. They could be the most dangerous people in the neighborhood.”

Brightwell says that portable generators were not designed to be connected into home wiring systems. Although they can be adapted for this use, professional installation and inspection are vital.

The Electrical Safety Authority recommends that consumers who choose to buy a standby generator work with a qualified licensed electrician or electrical contractor to help them determine the size and voltage required and to ensure the unit can be safely hooked up in their home.

Consumers are further advised to follow these tips:

- Select units that carry a product approval label from recognized safety agencies. This label indicates the unit has the proper connection receptacles and circuit breakers to provide fire protection (i.e. CSA International, Ulc, OMNI, Entella, etc.)
- Purchase the appropriate generator accessories, including an approved transfer device or switch and properly sized connector cord and plugs. Some manufacturers offer a complete generator package, ready for installation.

- Hire a licensed electrical contractor or electrician to install the unit.
- Have the installation inspected by the Electrical Safety Authority. Not only is this required by law, but it provides a second opinion that the generator has been properly grounded and bonded for safety. (visit: www.esasafe.com for information about the Electrical Safety Authority)
- Read and follow the owner's manual for usage and maintenance.
- Remember that a generator is a fuel-fired appliance and needs to be operated outdoors in a well-ventilated area to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

The Electrical Safety Authority is a self-funded, not-for-profit organization mandated to ensure compliance to the Ontario Electrical Safety Code in the electrical industry as well as in residential, commercial and industrial markets.

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For more information, visit our website at www.esasafe.com Or call:

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