

When the power goes out, some residents turn to portable generators to light their homes and keep appliances working. Always **read and follow the instructions** that come with the generator. When used improperly, generators pose a hazard by allowing dangerous carbon monoxide fumes to enter the home and increasing the risk of fire.

Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning and minimize the risk of fire by incorporating the safety practices listed below:

1. **Never use a generator indoors** or in an enclosed garage or carport. Generators should be placed outside, a safe distance away from windows, vents, and air intakes. Be sure to maintain plenty of space around the generator.
2. Avoid plugging the generator into a **wall outlet** or **back-feeding power**. Back-feeding power means that electricity is flowing in the opposite of its usual flow. Doing so will place yourself and others, like utility workers, in extreme danger because the transformer can increase low voltage from the generator to high voltage.
3. Install a working carbon monoxide alarm and smoke alarm inside your home. Be prepared to evacuate the home if either begins sounding.
4. Only use the recommended fuel for the generator: **Never attempt to refuel the generator while it's running**. Store fuel for the generator in an approved, safe container. The fuel should be stored away from the generator.
5. When in use, the exterior portion of the generator will be hot and may cause serious burn injuries or ignite nearby combustibles. Never touch a hot generator or place items too close.
6. **Go outside the home if you experience the symptoms of CO poisoning:** headache, dizziness, nausea, and fatigue. Call 911 and seek medical attention immediately.
7. Don't go back inside the home until the issue is corrected and the structure is ventilated.



For additional information on home fire and life safety, please contact the Gwinnett Fire Community Risk Reduction Division Education Section at 678.518.4845 or email fireprograms@gwinnettcounty.com.