

# RISK CONTROL CONSULTING

## Portable Generators – Safe Practices

When severe weather strikes or wildfires have swept through an area taking out power to homes, a generator can be a valuable piece of equipment. However, these devices are powered by a combustion engine that produce heat and exhaust containing potentially hazardous components; the most prominent being Carbon Monoxide. Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless gas that is heavier than air and can cause serious acute health affects which may lead to death. Poisonous levels can be reached in minutes if proper procedures are not followed. CO is harmful when breathed because it displaces oxygen in the blood and deprives the heart, brain and other vital organs of oxygen. Symptoms of CO exposure include tightness in the chest, headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea and dizziness. Prolonged or high exposure symptoms may worsen and include vomiting, confusion and collapse, loss of consciousness, muscle weakness and death.

The operator is responsible for understanding the use of all controls, output receptacles and connections. Anyone who operates the unit must receive proper instruction. Do not allow children under 18 years of age to operate the generator.

### Take the following precautions when using your generator:

#### **NEVER run a generator in an enclosed space or indoors**

- 1 This includes a basement, garage, shed, crawl space or any partially enclosed space. Place it at least 20 feet from the house with the engine exhaust directed away from windows, doors and vents. Use working, battery operated carbon monoxide detectors in the home with alarms.

#### **Prevent Fire and Burn Hazards:**

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  - Place generator on a level surface
  - Check for signs of oil or gasoline leaks (do not use if unit shows signs of leaks)
  - Never overfill a generator
  - Never fill while it's still hot
  - Clean spilled gas and wait for it to dry before powering the generator
  - Do not store fuel storage containers within 3 feet of the generator
  - Fuel should be stored in an approved container (5 gallons or less, allowing room for some expansion), with the cap tightly sealed and at room temperature
  - Keep a clear 5 foot radius of empty space above and around your generator (away from buildings, other equipment and flammable materials)
  - Never smoke nearby
  - Keep a fire extinguisher handy
  - Do not touch the muffler while running – let the engine cool before storing it indoors

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## Electrical Shock Hazards

The generator produces enough electrical power to cause a serious shock or electrocution if misused.

- Do not use in wet conditions. This includes rain, snow, near a pool or sprinkler system or when your hands are wet. Moisture or ice can cause a malfunction or short circuit that could result in electrocution. Keep the generator dry/covered.
- Make sure the generator is properly grounded.
- Do not connect to a building's electrical system unless an isolation or transfer switch has been installed to your circuit panel by a qualified electrician.
- If you must use an extension cord, it should be a heavy-duty grounded (three-pronged) one for outdoor use.
- Inspect all cords to assure they are intact and not damaged, cut or abraded.
- *DO NOT* plug the generator into a wall outlet. This can cause damage to your electronics or start an electrical fire.
- Do not manipulate a generator's electrical components if you are wet or standing in water.
- *Never overload your generator.* Make sure the electrical rating of the tool or appliance does not exceed the rated power of the generator or the receptacle being use.
- Never connect a generator to a different generator model (parallel operation). Units may not be compatible and result in failure.

**This document is a best practices for portable generators and not a replacement for reading and following the manufacture's owner's manual prior to use. If you have any questions about the generator, consult an authorized Honda dealer or as instructed by your tribal representative.**

For additional information contact:

Tribal First Risk Control Solution Center Toll Free Help Line: 888 737 4752.

This Tribal First Risk Control Consulting safety program and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue the direction and guidance of the Tribe's General Counsel's office in conjunction with the office of Public Safety were applicable. For more information on this topic, please contact Tribal First Risk Control Consulting at (888) 737-4752 or [riskcontrol@tribalfirst.com](mailto:riskcontrol@tribalfirst.com)

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