



Press contact:

Pete Zeller
216.579.6100 ext. 2
email: pete@CunninghamBaron.com

PGMA Urges Preparedness for Safe Portable Generator Use During Hurricane Season *Industry group develops pre-storm preparedness program; details best practices to avoid carbon monoxide and other hazards*

July 6, 2021—Weather experts predict a dangerous and active hurricane season, a time when usage of portable generators peaks. And Tropical Storm Elsa is already here.

Unfortunately, the storms themselves are not the only risk factor—and, in fact, are not always the leading cause of injury or death.

Portable generators are life-saving emergency safety tools; however, because of improper consumer use, people suffer carbon monoxide poisoning year after year. To put this into perspective, when Hurricane Laura hit Louisiana in August 2020, 26 people died due to various circumstances, with carbon monoxide poisoning claiming the most lives—nine.

The Portable Generator Manufacturers' Association (PGMA) wants to rewrite the news story in advance of this season's first storm.

[Take it Outside™](#) is a program developed to help keep owners of portable generators and their families safe by encouraging at-risk residents to start thinking about where generators can be safely used. Much like preparing families for a fire and creating a strategy in advance of calamity, actions are needed—and can be taken—before a storm strikes.

Specifically, the Take it Outside program emphasizes that the only safe way to operate a portable generator is by taking it outside. Planning for (1) where you will position your alternative energy source and (2) ensuring you have enough extension cord length to accommodate the safe distance is mandatory to keep people safe from the colorless, odorless threat of carbon monoxide.

Complete primer notes include:

Avoid Carbon Monoxide Inhalation

Always read and follow the portable generator operator's manual before operating. Engine exhaust contains carbon monoxide, which you cannot smell, see or taste, and it can be deadly. Carbon monoxide can quickly build up and linger for hours, even after the generator has shut off.

Only operate the portable generator outside, far away from windows, doors and vents to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide gas accumulating and potentially being drawn toward occupied spaces. **DO NOT** run a portable generator inside homes, garages, basements, crawl spaces, sheds or other partially enclosed space even if using fans or opening doors and windows for ventilation. **ALWAYS** place a portable generator downwind, far away from windows, doors and vents, and point the engine exhaust away from occupied spaces.

Install battery-operated carbon monoxide alarms or plug-in carbon monoxide alarms with battery backup according to the manufacturer's instructions. Smoke alarms cannot detect carbon monoxide gas.

If you feel sick, dizzy or weak while using your portable generator, shut it off and get to fresh air immediately. See a doctor, as you may have carbon monoxide poisoning.

Avoid Electrical Hazards

Generators can pose a risk of shock and electrocution, especially if they are operated in wet conditions. If you must use a generator when it is wet outside, protect the generator from moisture (as described in the owner's manual) to help avoid the shock/electrocution hazard. Do so without operating the generator indoors or near openings to any building that can be occupied, to help avoid the carbon monoxide hazard. Operate the generator on a dry surface where water cannot reach it or puddle or drain under it. If hands are wet, dry them before touching the generator.

Connect appliances to the generator using heavy-duty extension cords that are specifically designed for outdoor use. Make sure the wattage rating for each cord exceeds the total wattage of all appliances connected to it. Use extension cords that are long enough to allow the generator to be placed outdoors and far away from windows, doors and vents to the home or to other structures that could be occupied. Check that the entire length of each cord is free of cuts or tears and that the plug has all three (or four) prongs. Protect the cord from getting pinched or crushed and follow all cord safety labels including any limits on cord length.

NEVER try to power home wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet, a practice known as "backfeeding." This is extremely dangerous and presents an electrocution risk to utility workers and neighbors served by the same utility transformer. It also bypasses some of the built-in household circuit protection devices.

Avoid Fire Hazards

Never store fuel for your generator inside the home. Gasoline, propane, kerosene, and other flammable liquids should be stored outside of living areas in properly-labeled, non-glass safety containers. Do not store any of these substances near a fuel-burning appliance, such as a natural gas water heater in a garage.

Before refueling a generator, turn it off and let it cool down for at least two minutes before removing the fuel cap. Gasoline spilled on hot engine parts could ignite. Never refuel a running portable generator.

Inevitably storms will come and power outages will happen. What can and does help is preparedness.

Please consider reviewing our [safety materials](#), make a plan, and practice the plan.

About PGMA

The Portable Generator Manufacturers' Association (PGMA) is a trade association that seeks to develop and influence safety and performance standards for our industry's products. The Association is also dedicated to educating consumers and tradespersons on the safe use of portable generators and has developed the Take it Outside™ campaign to support its mission. Formed in 2009, PGMA members include major manufacturers of portable generators sold in North America and a significant majority of the industry. www.pgmaonline.com.

Member companies include: American Honda Motor Co., Briggs & Stratton, LLC, Champion Power Equipment, DuroMax Power Equipment, Firman Power Equipment, Generac Power Systems, Harbor Freight Tools USA, Inc., Yamaha Motor Corp USA, and associate members, Figaro USA, Inc., GenTent Safety Canopies, and Nemoto Sensor Engineering Co. Ltd..