



GREAT LAKES  
**ENERGY**



RESIDENTIAL  
**GENERATOR**  
INFORMATION

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or call 888-485-2537



# Portable or Stationary?

Homeowners with a backup power system usually have a portable or stationary generator.

Cost, convenience, and emergency power. These are among the main factors that will determine the best system for you.

## OTHER OPTIONS

Consider an inverter generator that uses less fuel and is less likely to damage the sensitive electronics in appliances and home entertainment equipment. Wheeled models with an electric start allow for easy transport and require less physical exertion.



### ▶ Portable Systems

When restoring only the basic necessities during an emergency situation (heat, water, refrigeration, etc.) portable generators may be the optimal choice. Financially friendly, a portable generator is both less expensive to buy and install than a stationary system. Though generally used for shorter periods of time, some can use up to 20 gallons of gasoline per day if run continuously for 24 hours.



### ▶ Stationary Systems

For long term outages, a stationary system would be the ideal backup plan. Stationary systems are large enough to power an entire home for extended periods of time. They switch on automatically when an outage occurs, and shut off when power is restored. For maximum efficiency, a large propane tank or natural gas line can be connected to fuel it.



## The Most Important Feature: **SAFETY**

Failure to connect and operate a portable generator safely can lead to:

- ▶ **Fire**
- ▶ **Damage to home appliances and electronic equipment**
- ▶ **Deadly carbon monoxide poisoning**
- ▶ **Harm to linemen or others by shock or electrocution.**

## Installation Safety

Do not connect a portable generator yourself to your home wiring. Hire a licensed electrician to safely install a transfer switch which will eliminate two potentially dangerous hazards:

- ▶ Power from the generator can flow back into the power lines endangering the lives of those working to restore your power. Downed power lines can become energized endangering family members and neighbors nearby. Always assume a downed power line is energized and keep clear.
- ▶ Serious electrical damage could result if power from the generator and Great Lakes Energy both flow into your home at the same time.

**Meter bases equipped with a built-in transfer switch can be purchased from Great Lakes Energy. Contact us for more information.**

- ▶ **Contact GLE to let us know you have a generator, we will note your account.**

## DO'S AND DON'TS

- ▶ **DO** hire an electrician to install the unit to ensure it doesn't backfeed into our lines and harm a lineman. Contact us to let us know you use a generator.
- ▶ **DO** properly ground the generator and keep it dry to avoid potentially fatal electric shocks.
- ▶ **DO** use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs), especially where electrical equipment may get wet or damp.
- ▶ **DO** use only extension cords that meet the generator manufacturer's specifications and are rated to handle the particular use.
- ▶ **DO** operate the generator outdoors and protect it from rain and other moisture. Invest in a nonflammable cover to keep it dry. The generator should be at least 25 feet away from the house and away from doors, windows and vents. Operating a generator in a garage can result in deadly buildup of carbon monoxide.
- ▶ **DO** consider portable models with removable control panels to safely plug in appliances and eliminate the need to run extension cords outside in wet weather.
- ▶ **DO** carefully read all the literature that the manufacturer provides for safe connection, operation and maintenance of your system. Since units may go unused for a time, routine maintenance is important.
- ▶ **DON'T** overload a generator, which can lead to overheating and a fire hazard.
- ▶ **DON'T** refuel until the generator has cooled off. You could cause an explosion.

## For more information:

Visit the Electrical Safety Foundation International website ([esfi.org](http://esfi.org)) and search "generators" for more information on generator safety.

▶ You can also visit our web site for information on generator safety.

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**NOTE:** This guide provides general information on two common backup power systems used by homeowners during an emergency. Before investing in a generator, Great Lakes Energy members should consult a licensed electrician to determine the type of system and size that meets your needs. For safety reasons, a licensed electrician will install the system and ensure it complies with all applicable codes and regulations.

▶ **GLE does not sell or install generators.**

▶ **Contact GLE for a meter base with built in transfer switch.**



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*Great Lakes Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

*SOURCES: Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI), Consumer Reports, Great Lakes Energy*

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