

TOOLBOX TALKS

Portable Generators

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TOPIC: Portable Generators

Whether keeping the lights on at a jobsite or powering tools in remote locations, the portable generator has found its way into most industrial applications. **Like any tool, it is important to know the hazards and limitations to prevent mishaps.** Review some of the suggested safety tips below and see how safe your practices are around generators.

- Only run the engine outdoors with plenty of ventilation. Exhaust gases contain carbon monoxide, an odorless gas which binds to hemoglobin in the blood, preventing oxygen from being transferred to the body. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include dizziness, nausea and sleepiness.
- Always shut down the engine prior to making or removing connections.
- Never attempt to move a running generator.
- Always shut down the engine and allow it to cool before refueling.
- Never overfill the tank. Only fill within ½ inch from the top of the tank to allow for expansion.
- Make sure that hot exhaust gases are never directed toward anything flammable or explosive. Keep the generator at least 3 feet from any buildings or structures.
- Consider using a spark arrestor over the exhaust if operating in an area of dry grasses, brush or forest.
- Be sure you know how to stop the engine quickly in the event of an emergency.
- Familiarize yourself with the sound output ratings of your generator and wear hearing protection, if required.
- Keep a fire extinguisher near the generator while it is in operation.
- Never attempt to connect power to a building unless a licensed electrician has installed an approved transfer switch.
- Test and reset the Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter monthly.
- Remove all electrical connections and the negative lead to the battery before attempting any type of service to the generator.
- Always make sure the system is properly grounded before operating. Never connect the generator output neutral to the ground or frame.
- Know which parts of the generator become hot when running. These areas are not only burn hazards, but the involuntary jerk from touching a hot object could cause your hand to contact a high voltage area resulting in shock.

Questions to Generate Discussion

- Does your generator produce enough sound to require hearing protection?
- Why is it hazardous to refuel a generator while it is operating?

Discussion Date: _____

Employee Participants:

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