



Safe use of portable generators

If your electricity has been interrupted, a portable generator can be a convenient way to maintain power to some appliances. However, it can pose serious health and safety risks if not installed or used correctly.

To safely use a generator to power your house or office electrical installation you must have a changeover switch installed by a licensed electrical contractor. The changeover switch safely supplies power from a generator to the wiring installed in the premises and prevents power being fed back into the electricity grid.

Follow these simple steps to safely use your portable generator:

Don't:

- Do not DIY electrical work. A licensed electrical contractor must be engaged to safely install a changeover switch to connect a generator to your home or office wiring.
- Do not modify and plug generators directly into power points or into the home or office wiring. Plugging a generator into a power point in your home or office will send electricity through the switchboard into the electricity network causing a safety hazard to you, your family, neighbour or tradespeople working on the electricity network.
- Do not use modified leads to connect a generator to the wiring of your house. These are a serious safety hazard and can cause an electric shock.
- Do not plug a generator into any part of the electricity network. This will feed electricity back into the network causing a safety hazard.
- Do not overload your generator. Refer to the rated wattage of your generator to determine the number of appliances it can safely power.
- Do not overload power boards by 'piggy backing' plugs into one socket or using double adaptors.
- Do not operate or connect to a generator that is sitting in water or while you are standing in water.

Do:

- Appliances can be plugged directly into the generator. However, always read the manufacturer's instructions carefully.
- Use a heavy duty extension cord rated for outdoor use.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for earthing the generator.
- Ensure appliances are turned off before connecting them to your generator. Once connected, turn them on one at a time to avoid overloading the generator.



- Only use a generator that complies with AS2970 and has the Australian Standard mark on the generator.
- Ensure all power leads and boards are in good working order and are not damaged.
- Ensure power boards and leads are placed in areas that are dry and where they will not be damaged.

Carbon monoxide hazards

- Petrol or diesel powered generators produce toxic carbon monoxide fumes that can cause serious health issues or can be fatal.
- Always run your portable generator outdoors in a well ventilated area and keep it well away from open windows.