

Christie Administration Issues Generator Safety Advisory Ahead of Hurricane Sandy

Friday, October 26, 2012 Tags: [Other](#)

State Fire Officials Warn of Electrocutation Risk from "Backfeeding" of Power Lines

Trenton, NJ – New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Richard E. Constable, III today issued a warning to residents regarding the potential dangers of portable generators and "backfeeding" during power outages. An increase in the use of generators is expected with the arrival of Hurricane Sandy in the coming days, raising the importance of educating New Jerseyans on their proper and safe use.

Portable generators, widely used when power lines are down, can prove fatal to homeowners, utility workers and even your neighbors when used improperly. A generator connected to a home's wiring or plugged into a regular household outlet can cause 'backfeeding' along power lines and electrocute anyone who comes in contact with them – even if the line seems dead.

'Backfeeding' happens when a portable generator is connected directly to the home's wiring without having a functional transfer switch. Without a transfer switch, a portable generator's electricity can be sent back into the power grid from your house. This will energize the utility's power lines on the street and poses an electrocution hazard for those who may not know that the voltage is present on the shared lines.

The general public – as well as first responders – should assume that all power lines are energized and the risk of electrocution is high if proper measures are not observed.

"Even though power may be out in your immediate area, improperly connected portable generators are capable of 'backfeeding' power lines thought to be inactive," said Commissioner Constable. "In addition, as the utility's power is restored, your portable generator and house wiring may be severely damaged from improper usage."

Acting Division of Fire Safety Director William Kramer, Jr., also warns that although portable generators can be very helpful to during outages, "it is imperative that the public follow safety guidelines when using one."

Portable Generator Safety Tips:

Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring unless your home has been wired for generator use. This can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including lineworkers making repairs. Have a licensed electrician install the equipment necessary to safely connect emergency generators to your home.

Always plug appliances directly into generators. Connecting the generator to your home's circuits or wiring must be done by a qualified, licensed electrician who will install a transfer switch to prevent backfeeding.

Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords. Make sure extension cords are free of cuts or tears and the plug has three prongs. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage.

Ensure your generator is properly grounded.

Never overload a generator. A portable generator should only be used when necessary to power essential equipment or appliances.

Turn off all equipment powered by the generator before shutting it down.

Keep the generator dry. Operate it on a dry surface under an open structure.

Always have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby.

Never fuel a generator while it is operating.

Read and adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation. Never cut corners when it comes to safety.

The Division of Fire Safety serves as the central fire service agency in New Jersey. The Division is responsible for the development and enforcement of the State Uniform Fire Code, as well as for implementing public education and firefighter training programs.

For more information, log on to <http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dfs/> on the DCA website.

Stay Connected
with Social Media

Stay Connected
with Email Alerts

LIKE THIS PAGE? SHARE IT WITH YOUR FRIENDS.



###

Press Contact:
Michael Drewniak
Kevin Roberts
609-777-2600



[Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [Legal Statement & Disclaimers](#) | [Accessibility Statement](#) | 

Statewide: [NJ Home](#) | [Services A to Z](#) | [Departments/Agencies](#) | [FAQs](#)
Office of the Governor: [Home](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Media](#) | [Administration](#) | [NJ's Priorities](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2018
Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000