Emergency and Standby Generators Article 7

Generators can provide great benefits for residents and businesses during times of power outages, however, if not used properly they can be very dangerous to you, your family, emergency workers, or your business. Before you purchase a generator, it is important to assess your needs, research, and talk to professionals who are knowledgeable in the area of generator installation, and safety. There are three types of generators that are available, a standby generator, which starts automatically, a portable generator, or a backup model, which must be manually activated and is generally permanently mounted.

The first step is to determine the size of generator you will need. To do this, calculate the wattage of items you want to power. For example, there may be several items that will be on your "must have power" list. An average refrigerator with top freezer is about 1000 watts. A counter top microwave unit will typically require about 1100 watts. You will need some sort of a heater, or your furnace, which will use at least 1500 watts. Add some lighting and you are to at least a 3500 watt generator.

If you opt for a portable generator, it must be run outdoors only (never in the garage!) and not near an open door or window. Also, never plug it into your house wiring without using an approved transfer switch and 12 awg extension cord; otherwise you could electrocute a repairman working on the downed powerlines!

Because of the many safety concerns, rules and regulations associated with purchasing, installing, and using a generator, Puget Sound Energy has developed many resources to assist citizens and businesses with this.

- PSE Energy Advisor, at 1-800-562-1482, can help you with determining the generator, type, size, installation details, or answer additional questions, prior to purchasing a generator. With permanently installed generators, all codes, regulations, and laws must be followed.
- Customer Construction Services Department, at 1-888-321-7779, can provide assistance in determining the supply available from your current meter and servicing size for a standby generator.

Since there are many items to consider when purchasing and installing a generator, it is important to contact professionals who can assist you with your purchase. Professionals can guide you through the purchase, installation and use of your generator. For more information, visit http://www.pse.com/solutions/foryourhome/Pages/Generators.aspx