



EMERGENCY BACK-UP GENERATORS

The Town of Corte Madera Municipal Code and the California Building Code set rules for placement, installation, and use of emergency back-up generators. Back-up generators can be temporary (portable), or permanently mounted. Generators used strictly for emergency periods, such as during power outages, are exempt from the noise restrictions set forth in Corte Madera Municipal Code (CMMC) Chapter 9.36 – Noise. Whenever possible, property owners should select a generator that emits a lower range of decibels (dBA) or with sound-attenuated equipment housing designed to reduce noise emission.

Temporary (portable) generators.

A building permit is generally not required for use of a gasoline or diesel powered portable generator if you are connecting household appliances using a heavy-duty outdoor-rated extension cord. A building permit is required for a portable generator connected to the house wiring directly using a transfer switch. The placement and use of a portable emergency generator used strictly for emergency periods is not regulated by the Town, but there are important basic safety reminders to be aware of. California Fire Code reads that no more than 10 gallons of fuel should be stored in a Department of Transportation-approved container. Please refer to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) “Generator Safety” handout attached.

Residential permanently mounted generators.

A building permit is required for the installation of any permanently mounted generator. Submittal requirements for a permanently mounted generator are as follows:

- Building Permit Application
- Plans or drawings (4-5 sets) and construction documents (2 sets):
 - Project address, owner name, mailing address and phone/email of responsible designer, signature/seal of person preparing the construction documents, scale used for all drawings, north arrow, scope of work, project data and scope of work, and list of the codes in effect at time of application.
 - Site Plan identifying the location of all structures on the site, proposed location of the generator, dimensions, and distance between the generator and property lines and existing or proposed structures and required setbacks. Note any utilities or other easements present in the vicinity of the generator. A permanent generator should comply with front, side and rear setbacks in the applicable zoning district.
 - Generator technical data (manufacturer specs, cut sheets, sound analysis, installation instructions)
 - Permanent generators shall be supplied by natural gas only. The Fire Department does not allow above-ground fuel/propane tanks in heavily populated areas.
 - Provide electrical schematic and plumbing schematic for the gas line.
 - An exterior emergency shut-off shall be supplied that will isolate the generator from the residence. The shut-off shall be located within 8 feet of the gas meter.
 - Warning labels shall be installed reading “THIS BUILDING IS SUPPLIED BY AN AUXILLARY POWER GENERATOR” or similar language.
 - If the property is located in the flood zone, additional requirements may apply.

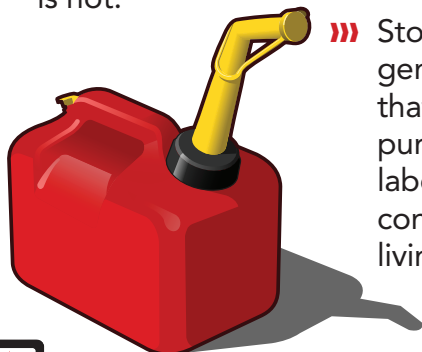
There are additional requirements for commercial generators or generators associated with a wireless facility.



Generator Safety

Downed utility lines, power company blackouts, heavy snow falls or summer storms can all lead to power outages. Many people turn to a portable generator for a temporary solution without knowing the risks.

- » Generators should be used in well ventilated locations outside away from all doors, windows and vent openings.
- » Never use a generator in an attached garage, even with the door open.
- » Place generators so that exhaust fumes can't enter the home through windows, doors or other openings in the building.
- » Make sure to install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in your home. Follow manufacturer's instructions for correct placement and mounting height.
- » Turn off generators and let them cool down before refueling. Never refuel a generator while it is hot.



- » Store fuel for the generator in a container that is intended for the purpose and is correctly labeled as such. Store the containers outside of living areas.

Just Remember...

When plugging in appliances, make sure they are plugged directly into the generator or a heavy duty outdoor-rated extension cord. The cords should be checked for cuts, tears and that the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin.

If you must connect the generator to the house wiring to power appliances, have a qualified electrician install a properly rated transfer switch in accordance with the National Electrical Code® (NEC) and all applicable state and local electrical codes.

FACT

- ! CO deaths associated with generators have spiked in recent years as generator sales have risen.



Your Source for SAFETY Information

NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169