

# PARK SPARKS

MARCH 2023

## *Play it Safe: 10 Do's and Don'ts When Using Portable Generators*

*By Abby Berry*

Power outages can happen at any time of the year. If you're planning to use a portable generator in the event of an outage, Park Electric reminds you to play it safe. With proper use and maintenance, portable generators can provide great convenience during an outage. However, when generators are used incorrectly, they can be extremely hazardous. In a 2022 report, the Consumer Product Safety Commission estimated 85 U.S. consumers die every year from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gasoline-powered portable generators.

Here are 10 do's and don'ts to keep in mind when using portable generators:

1. DO: Install backup CO alarms.
2. DO: Keep children and pets away from portable generators at all times.
3. DO: Position generators at least 25 feet outside the home, away from doors, windows and vents that can allow CO to enter the home.
4. DO: Ensure your generator is properly grounded. Use a portable ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to prevent electric shock injuries.
5. DO: Use three-pronged extension cords that are rated to handle the load of the generator. Inspect extension cords for cuts, frays or other damage before use.
6. DON'T: Operate a generator inside your home or an enclosed (or partially-enclosed) space. Generators produce high levels of CO, which can be deadly.
7. DON'T: Open windows or doors while the generator is running.
8. DON'T: Rely on generators as a full-time source of power. They should only be used temporarily or in emergency situations to power essential equipment or appliances.
9. DON'T: Overload generators. They should only be used to power essential equipment. Make sure your generator can handle the load of the items you plan to power.
10. DON'T: Connect generators directly into household wiring unless you have an appropriate transfer switch installed. If a generator is connected to a home's wiring without a transfer switch, power can backfeed along power lines and electrocute utility lineworkers making repairs.

While generators provide convenience during power outages, they can quickly become hazardous—even deadly—if improperly operated. Before you operate a portable generator, be sure to thoroughly read the owner's manual for important safety information and tips.

If you have questions about proper use of portable generators, we're here to help. Give us a call at 406-222-7778 or contact us at [info@parkelectric.coop](mailto:info@parkelectric.coop).

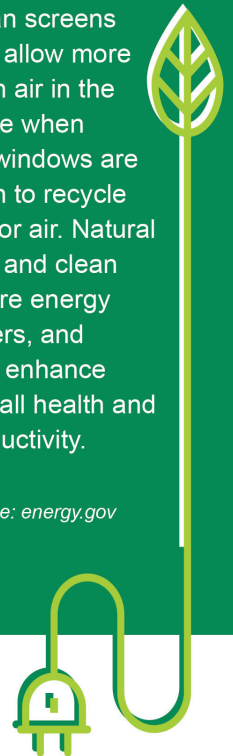


## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Washing windows and screens is a great way to practice energy efficiency during spring cleaning. Clean windows and screens make your home brighter by allowing more sunlight in, reducing the need for lamps and fixtures.

Clean screens also allow more fresh air in the home when the windows are open to recycle indoor air. Natural light and clean air are energy savers, and they enhance overall health and productivity.

Source: [energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov)



# Managers Comments

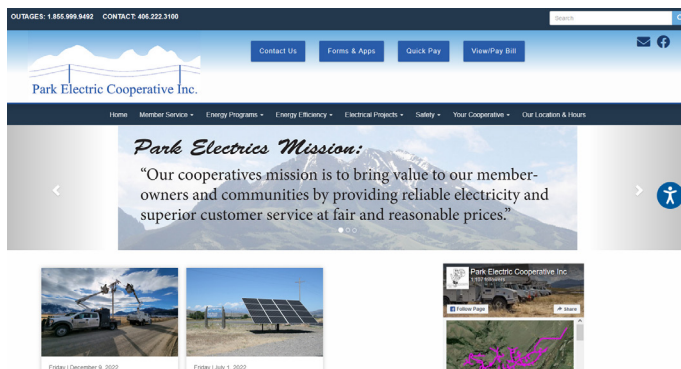
by Matt Haggerty

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When was the last time you visited our website at [www.parkedelectric.coop](http://www.parkedelectric.coop)? We have spent the past few years updating and enhancing our website and the information it provides. If you haven't checked it

out in a while, we encourage you to do so. Let's take a closer look at what you can find:

- At the top of the home page, you will see a line of buttons that include Contact Us, Forms & Apps, Quick Pay, and View/Pay Bill.
- Clicking the Forms & Apps button will lead you to all of our available forms and application such as job applications, new service applications, scholarship, and Youth Tour applications, as well as rebate forms, grant forms for assistance with bill payment, and Senior rate discount forms.
- Clicking the Quick Pay button will lead you to a link within our bill payment system. This link allows you to pay your bill without logging in. All you need is the account number and the last 4 digits of any phone number associated with the account. You can use this feature to pay with a check or credit card.
- The View/Pay Bill button leads you to our online customer service portal where you can set up your online account and view your bills, set up auto pay, and much more. Remember, if you need any additional assistance, you can still call the office for help.
- In the middle of the home page, there are menu drop-downs for Member Service, Energy Programs, Energy Efficiency, Electrical Projects, Safety, and Your Cooperative.
- Under the Member Service menu, you can find detailed information about capital credits, billing information, rates, and grants.
- The Energy Programs menu will show you



information about our Rebate program, the Heat Rate program, Green Power, and the Renewable Interconnection program.

- The Rebate program provides information on the Energy Star rebates we offer for many different types of appliances.
- The Green Power program allows our members to voluntarily contribute to the development of

alternate energy production facilities such as wind energy.

- For members that have an interest in Renewable Energy Interconnections, we have several generous programs for them. Net Metering and Direct Purchase allow our members to install small generation sources at their homes such as solar panels or small wind turbines.
- For members wanting to know how to save money or lower their power consumption, we have dedicated the Energy Efficiency menu to you. This section is broken down by savings ideas that could be done easily by the homeowner or as larger projects that may involve a contractor.
- Planning on adding or changing a service? The Electrical Projects tab reviews all of the steps to expect and complete during this process. It explains easements, permits, and fees to get a job estimate.
- The Your Cooperative menu is where you will find the bylaws of the coop, board districts, cooperative principles, our energy portfolio, and much more. This is the place to find contact information for our board members as well.

Finally, don't miss the bottom of the home page. The News section is the place to look for current news and events about your coop. We also have a live window to our Facebook page for members who want to stay up to date but aren't on social media. We are always looking for ways to communicate with our members, and we encourage everyone to stop by the website to learn more about Park Electric.