

# 6 Reasons to Install a Standby Generator for Hurricane Season

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by dkelectrical

August is the beginning of hurricane season in New Jersey. That means it's time to prepare your home for potential large storms coming in from the Atlantic. One important way to prepare your home for hurricane season on the northeastern coast is by installing a whole-home backup generator. You may be considering a portable generator for hurricane emergency use because it's inexpensive. But, there are some serious disadvantages to using a portable unit as a hurricane preparedness generator. Here are some important reasons why homeowners in areas vulnerable to hurricanes should install a whole-house backup generator instead of depending on a portable.

## Superior Reliability

Major hurricanes often leave thousands, even hundreds of thousands of families, without electricity for extended periods. So, if you live in a hurricane zone, you should have an emergency power generator, if possible. But, the portable generators that so many residents purchase are not built to supply a whole house or to run continuously over extended periods. A whole-house generator offers the reliable power supply, safety, and convenience that portable models cannot deliver:

## Portable Generator

**Short Run-Time Limit:** Most low-cost portable generators can only power a house for up to about 10 hours, and they can only output enough power for *part* of a house. They're designed for only occasional light use.

**Fire Hazard:** Running a portable generator for excessive time lengths in some spaces protected from the weather can cause a buildup of flammable gas fumes, increasing the risk of fire.

**Small Load Capacity:** A portable generator has only enough power to run a couple of electrical appliances in a home simultaneously. A portable model can barely keep a refrigerator running and cannot keep an air conditioning system, TV, internet service, and washer or dryer, all operating at once.

**Fuel Issues:** Portable generators run on gasoline, which is a fuel type that is often very scarce and hard to obtain during emergencies like hurricanes.

## Standby Generator

**Long Run-Time:** A propane backup generator should be able to supply your entire home and run from about 3 to 10 days (depending on tank size). Units that run on *natural gas* can run your whole house continuously for many days.

**Safe Operation:** A whole-house backup generator is designed and engineered to power your entire home through prolonged periods. They are installed for secure, safe operation in hurricanes.

**Full Load Capacity:** Whole-house standby generators are designed to keep all the functions of your home from being shut down. A whole-home generator enables you to continue fully using your home comfortable even if the electrical power is out in your area for an unexpectedly long time.

**No Fuel Issues:** Whole-home generators typically use propane or natural gas, which can be stored in abundance long-term onsite in preparation for extended periods of emergency use.

Some top brands of standby generators provide technology for monitoring and reporting the status of your system to you. (Some manufacturers even offer a handy app for this.) Additionally, a technician can periodically perform a full-scope inspection of your backup generator to ensure complete preparedness for power outages.

## Greater Practicality and Convenience

With a portable generator, you'll need to try to go outside when the power goes out to start up the generator. Trying to fuel and start a portable generator outside during a hurricane is not the best situation to be in.

With an installed backup generator, if a severe storm happens, your power comes back on automatically. There's no potential need to risk your safety, unlike when fueling and starting a portable generator in dangerous conditions. Within the first 10 seconds of a power outage, a standby generator begins supplying electricity to your home, and it runs everything in your entire house for as long as needed.

## Much Quieter Operation

Portable generators are very loud, about 67-75 decibels on average, when running at only 25-50% load capacity. The exact ratios depend on the size. That's comparable to the noise volume of a vacuum cleaner. Because portables cannot be left alone due to the health and safety hazard, this means you are exposed to extreme noise day and night as long as using the generator is necessary.

Whole-house generators emit only about 54 decibels, which may not be noticeable at all inside your house. Standby generators can safely operate unsupervised at a distance from the home, which even further minimizes sound.

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## **Much Safer and Healthier**

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A portable generator left running unsupervised in a closed garage or basement to keep it dry during a storm presents an extreme health and safety hazard. Portable generators produce carbon monoxide, a deadly poison. Even slight exposure can cause symptoms.

A whole-home backup generator, its fuel source, and its power transfer switch are all installed outside your home, which prevents carbon monoxide risks. High-quality backup generators are installed to meet the standards for use during hurricanes. Providers also maintain technical support, as needed, to ensure continuous ideal functioning.

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## **Much Longer Equipment Life Expectancy**

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Portable generators are not built to achieve the long-term durability of installed units. Even the best portable generators come with very short and limited product warranty coverages of only one year or so.

Whole-home backup generators are built with a weatherproof casing that can withstand the years of extreme northern coastal weather, including hurricanes. A high-quality whole-house generator can keep running over extended periods without overheating as portable models can be expected to do. Industry-leading brands offer strong warranties that cover the units for *thousands of hours* running time, amounting to coverage of up to 15 years of hurricane seasons or more.

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## **Long-Term Financial Benefits**

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Whole-home standby generators are built with high-durability composite outer coverings that do not rust or corrode over many years. This is a crucial advantage for homeowners in the northeast U.S. coastal region. The equipment can last to provide emergency protection for years to come.

Additionally, homebuyers are likely to be attracted to the security of having a whole-home backup generator in a house they are considering purchasing in an area where hurricanes are possible in any given year.

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## **Overall Comparison of Generator Types**

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Portable generators should not be left operating without close supervision, they are less practical and convenient overall to use than backup generators, and their load capacity is very limited. Whole-home standby generators, by contrast, provide fully reliable functionality, safety, and ideal convenience and comfort during prolonged power outages in New Jersey. On all the above points of comparison, the best generator for hurricane season is a whole-home standby model.

## **For Proper Installation of Your Emergency Generator!**

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