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Generators & Transfer Switches

In today's world power outages are a real possibility. Generators are a good source of emergency power, however care must be taken to ensure the proper generator, cable connections and power transfer switch are sized and properly installed. The transfer switch is a device that switches your building from commercial power to generator power and back.

A potentially dangerous condition can result from failure to install proper transfer switches and the improper use of portable generators. Care must be taken to ensure commercial power and generator power cannot be connected at the same time. Because of these potential dangers the National Electrical Code requires the following:

Generators

- Generator used must be suitable for the environment, type 3 must be used outdoors
- Generator rated as rainproof cannot be mounted enclosed indoors
- Generator power conductors must be rated 115% of the nameplate rating of the unit
- All moving parts of a generator must have safety guards for operator protection
- Generators permanently installed must be wired using an approved equipment grounding conductor
- Generator connected loads must not be greater than the generating capacity of the generator
- Generators permanently installed must have the bonding jumper removed if the transfer switch does not switch the neutral

Transfer Switches

- The electric service used as a source must display a sign indicating the location of the generator
- Transfer switches must be approved for the installation and prevent simultaneous connection of the generator and utility service