



# Bermuda Fire Service

## HURRICANE / FIRE SAFETY TIP SHEET

The Bermuda Fire Service encourages you to use the following safety tips to help protect yourself, your family and your home from the potential threat of fire during or after a hurricane. You can greatly reduce your chances of becoming a fire casualty by being able to identify potential hazards and following the outlined safety tips.

### **SOME TYPES OF FIRE RELATED HAZARDS PRESENT DURING AND AFTER A HURRICANE**

- Turn the gas cylinder valve off during the storm
- Leaking gas lines, damaged or leaking gas propane containers can be a fire and explosion risk.
- Debris can easily ignite, especially if electrical wires are severed.
- Pools of water and even appliances can be electrically charged.
- Generators are often used during power outages. Unless generators are properly used and maintained, they can be very hazardous.
- Heating devices used incorrectly create fire hazards.
- Appliances that emit smoke or sparks should be repaired or replaced.

### **COMBUSTIBLE LIQUIDS SAFETY**

- Ensure that all combustible liquids are properly stored away from any heat source.
- Any storage of flammable or combustible liquids should be stored in approved storage containers.
- Appropriate portable fire extinguishers should be on hand and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

### **ELECTRICAL SAFETY**

- Assume all wires on the ground are electrically charged. This includes cable TV feeds.
- Look for and replace frayed or cracked extension and appliance cords, loose prongs, and plugs.
- Exposed outlets and wiring could present a fire and life safety hazard.
- Appliances that emit smoke or sparks should be repaired or replaced.
- Have a licensed electrician check your home for damage.

## HEATING SAFETY

- Do not use the kitchen oven range to heat your home
- Heaters need their space. Keep anything combustible at least 3 feet away
- It is advisable that your heaters have "tip switches". These "tip switches" are designed to automatically turn the heater off in the event they tip over
- Only use the type of fuel recommended by the manufacturer and follow suggested guidelines
- Never refill a kerosene space heater while it is operating or still hot
- Refuel heaters only outdoors
- Use a glass or metal screen in front of your fireplace to prevent sparks from igniting nearby carpets, furniture or other combustible items

## GAS SAFETY

- Smell and listen for leaky gas connections. If you believe there is a gas leak, immediately leave the house. **ONLY** if it is safe to do so, shut off the cylinder valve and move away to a safe area.
- **NEVER** strike a match. Any size flame can spark an explosion
- Before turning the gas back on, have the gas system checked by the LPG installing company.

## AND REMEMBER

- Be careful when using candles and **do not** leave them unattended! Keep the flame away from combustible objects and out of reach of children
- Some smoke alarms may be dependent on your home's electrical service and could be inoperative during a power outage. Check to see if your smoke alarm uses a back-up battery and install a new battery at least twice a year
- Smoke alarms should be tested monthly



### **Emergency Generators**

When using an emergency generator during a power failure, extreme care must be taken to ensure your safety as well as others who might be working to restore your power. **NEVER CONNECT YOUR GENERATOR TO THE HOUSE CURRENT.** All permanent connections must be made by a licensed electrician. If not properly connected, a generator may feed electrical current to service wires and place power company service personnel in danger.

When using a portable generator, plug the appliance directly into the generator. Other safety tips are listed below:

- **Do not** operate your generator inside the home. It must be located in a well ventilated area with air flow sufficient for cooling the engine and exhausting carbon monoxide fumes.
- Cover you generator and protect it from the elements to prevent electrical shorting and rusting. Make sure that nothing comes in contact with the exhaust system and that the exhaust is kept clear.
- **Do not** overload you generator. It must have a maximum wattage rating greater than your anticipated requirement.
- **Never** put fuel in your generator while it is running or the exhaust is still hot. The heat from the exhaust may ignite the fumes from the fuel.
- **Never** store gasoline inside you home or in an area where open flame is present, such as a water heater or other appliance with a pilot light or gas burner.

## Frequently Asked Questions About Generators

### 1. What size generator do I need?

Depending on their wattage output, generators will run anything from a small lamp to a number of large appliances. The following chart can be used as a guide to help you to determine what size generator you will need for the items you wish to operate. Most "total electric homes" of 1,200 to 3,000 square feet would require a 3,000 or 5,000 watt generator (not including the air conditioning/heating system). Some appliances, such as air conditioners, heaters, refrigerators, pumps, and other motors, require more wattage at startup than a reduced wattage to operate. The startup wattage should be considered when determining the size of the generator. Wattages on the following chart are averages. Check your appliance label for accurate wattage.

<u>Appliances</u>	<u>Run Wattage</u>	<u>Start Wattage</u>
Light Bulb	40-100 Watts	N/A
Television	400 Watts	N/A
Microwave	800-1000 Watts	N/A
Toaster Oven	1500 Watts	N/A
Portable Heater (5,000 BTU)	1500 Watts	1800 Watts
Refrigerator/Freezer	1000Watts	3000 Watts
Water Heater	3500-4500 Watts	N/A
Coffee Maker	1300 Watts	N/A
Air Conditioning (20,000 BTU)	3200 Watts	7500 Watts
Electronic Blanket	500 Watts	N/A
Clothes Washer	1000 Watts	3500 Watts

### 2. What is the difference between rated maximum watts?

A generator's wattage is the amount of power produced continuously, while maximum wattage is the power produced for short periods of time (such as a motor starting)

### 3. How are generators protected from overload?

Most generators feature AC circuit breakers. In the event of overloading, the circuit breaker will shut the unit down and trip. If this occurs, the overload condition must be corrected and the circuit breaker reset.

4. **How long will my generator run?**

Runtime will vary depending on several factors. The fuel tank capacity and how hard the generators works are the greatest factors in determining the runtime of your generator. Most new generators will provide information on fuel consumption and various load percentages, as well as the capacity of your fuel tank. With these two pieces of information, you can determine the runtime of your generator. Example: If your generator uses 1 gallon of fuel per hour at full load, and the fuel tank capacity is 8 gallons, then you can operate you generator at full load for 8 hours. **Remember, never fuel a generator while it is running or while the exhaust system is hot.** You should also exercise you generator on a regular basis to ensure its operating condition.

5. **What kind of extension cords should I use?**

Since your generators will be outside, you should be use an extension cord rated for outdoor use. Make sure that the extension cord is rated for the wattage of the appliance or appliances that you will be using.