

Operate Generators Wisely

By Ron Schultz

It is that time of year when the weather starts changing. We all should be thinking about having a plan and an outage kit available in the event of a power outage.

Klickitat PUD works hard to keep outages to a minimum and restore power quickly. However, widespread outages resulting from severe storms may prevent power restoration from being done without unforeseen delays.

Many customers have portable generators or fixed generators at their homes and businesses to use during a power outage or emergency. Using and installing a generator correctly and safely protects not only you, but also protects PUD line crews.

A generator without a properly installed transfer switch can backfeed along the power line and electrocute or injure anyone coming into contact with it, including our lineworkers who might be making repairs.

Klickitat PUD's distribution lines carry voltages of 12,470 volts between phases, and 7,200 volts if measured to ground. When a generator connected to the supply voltage source is unintentionally connected to the PUD system, the same transformer that steps down the voltage to your home or business steps up the voltage to the PUD delivery voltage. This would create a dangerous—and possibly deadly—situation should someone contact that line. KPUD recommends you have any generator transfer switch installation done by a licensed and bonded electrical contractor. The installation must be inspected by the state electrical inspector.

Other tips to remember:

- Make sure extension cords connected to the generator are in good condition and are rated for the load they intend to carry. The cord should have a grounding plug.
- Connect only essential equipment and appliances to the generator. Do not overload the generator.
- Only use the generator in a well-ventilated environment, as high carbon monoxide levels can be produced quickly and can be deadly.
- Use a ground fault circuit interrupter to prevent shocks and electrocution.
- Keep children away from the generator at all times.
- Store fuel safely away from the generator, living areas and any sources of combustion. Make sure the fuel is in properly labeled containers that are suitable for the type of fuel contained.
- Before refueling the generator, make sure it has been turned off and has cooled down.
- Have a fully charged fire extinguisher near the generator. Make sure the extinguisher is properly rated to extinguish any fuel sources that could ignite.

Did You Know?

- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission says 600 carbon monoxide poisoning deaths associated with portable generators were reported from 1999 to 2010. Recently, the average deaths per year has increased to 81.
- About 40 percent of all portable generator-related deaths occurred during the winter when homeowners often use generators during weather-related outages.
- Almost 70 percent of deaths related to portable generators occur at home, often with the generator operating in the basement, crawl space, garage or enclosed carport of owners who seek convenience without considering safety. ■

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

October

5—Lyle First Saturday breakfast, 7 to 10 a.m., Lyle Community Center

5—Concours de Maryhill Car Show, Maryhill Museum, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

6—Maryhill Loops Road hill climb/race up the first asphalt-paved road in Washington

8—Klickitat PUD commission meeting, 2 p.m.

7-11—Public Power Week

11—KPUD open house, Goldendale and White Salmon offices

12—Hood River photo walk, 9 a.m. to noon, meet at Hood River Visitors Center

14—Columbus Day, observed—Klickitat PUD offices are closed

19—Senior Center Breakfast, 9 to 10 a.m., Goldendale

19-20—Apple Valley Fall Harvest Celebration and Country BBQ; www.applevalleystory.com

19-20—Gorge Fruit & Craft Fair, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Hood River County Fairgrounds

22—Klickitat PUD commission meeting, 2 p.m.

26—Trunk or Treat Halloween event, The General Store, Goldendale; (509) 773-4941

26-27—Apple Valley Heirloom Apple Butter Festival & County BBQ; www.applevalleystory.com

26-27—Wake The Dead Halloween Ball, Columbia Gorge Hotel; www.columbiagorgehotel.com

31—Community Safe Halloween street fair, 5 to 8 p.m., Jewett Boulevard, White Salmon

