



**GENERATOR**

# Buyer's Guide

## Buying the right natural gas standby generator for your home

Purchasing a generator is an investment in comfort and peace of mind. Here are answers to common questions to help you make the best generator choice for your power needs.

### Why does the participating dealer need to come to my home?

A participating dealer must visually inspect your property to determine the best location to install your generator. Keep in mind:

- The closer the generator is to your gas and electric meters, the easier the installation and the lower the installation cost. But gas and electric meters are not always conveniently located next to each other.
- National electric and gas codes, city building codes and easements on your location may impact your decision.
- Homeowner association requirements for property improvements, if applicable, must be taken into account.

### What are your power priorities?

Now that you know where you want to locate the generator, you need to determine the size. Generators are rated in kilowatts (KW) — the higher the KW, the more powerful the generator. They can power your whole house, including the air conditioner or just a few dedicated circuits. The choice is yours, but it starts with a load analysis by a participating dealer. Before you meet with the dealer, ask yourself:

- How important is it to run the air conditioner during an outage, considering that heat and humidity can increase rapidly?
- What about food and medicines that require refrigeration, or power-assisted devices in the home?
- How long can you or your kids live without electronics or cell phones and other devices that need charging?
- Do you have a home office?
- Do you have a water well that runs on electricity?

You can perform your own basic power needs assessment by taking the wattage ratings off appliance name plates and sharing that information with a participating dealer.

However, there's no substitute for a load analysis by a knowledgeable professional like a participating dealer to make sure you get the right-sized generator.

### What is the Automatic Transfer Switch (ATS)?

A natural gas generator senses a power outage and restores power to your home within seconds. It's automatic — you don't lift a finger. Whether you're home or away, you can relax knowing the power is always on. Here's how it works:

- ATS detects an outage and disconnects your home from utility power.
- ATS starts the generator, which supplies clean power to the items you selected to power up, quickly and seamlessly for as long as the outage lasts.
- Once utility power is restored, the process is basically reversed, and your natural gas generator cools down and turns off.

Make sure you discuss the ATS with the dealer and get comfortable with how this great feature works.



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### Isn't a gasoline generator good enough?

Gasoline generators don't have the generating capacity of natural gas generators and can't power your whole house and the air conditioner. Also, gasoline generators:

- Require constant refueling, which means carrying gasoline cans in the rain or dark and finding an open gas station during a major event.
- Don't start automatically and are noisy.
- If you decide to purchase a gasoline generator, play it safe and never operate it in an enclosed space or refuel while the engine is still hot.

### What about the cost?

A typical 20KW generator installation can range from \$9,000 to \$12,000, but the installed costs are largely driven by the location and size of the generator.

- The more pipe or electric wiring needed to connect the generator to your home's gas meter and electric panel, the more it costs. Be sure to ask about upgrading your gas meter to ensure adequate pressure for all your natural gas appliances.
- The same is true of generating capacity — the more you need, the more it costs.

### The site visit advantage: Balancing power and budgeting needs

- Talk to your dealer about whole-house generation and managed whole-house generation solutions.
- Managed whole-house allows for load shedding so that noncritical loads don't operate when critical higher-wattage loads like an air conditioner are starting up.
- In some cases, a managed whole-house solution could allow for the installation of a smaller KW generator.

### What about service and maintenance?

The generator is powered by an engine not unlike your car, except that it burns natural gas instead of gasoline. Like your car, periodic maintenance is the key to keeping your generator in peak operating condition so it's there when you need it. Ask a participating dealer about maintenance and service plans.

### Exclusive discounts for CenterPoint Energy customers

Our participating dealers offer discounts on the generator purchase, and financing options are available through the dealer or manufacturer to make it even more affordable.

For more information, visit [CenterPointEnergy.com/Generators](http://CenterPointEnergy.com/Generators) or call **713-20POWER** (76937).

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**Natural Gas  
Generator Program**

