DAY 4 · POWER WHEN THE GRID IS DOWN

The Generator Checklist

TAPE IT TO THE GENERATOR

1 Where it runs

NEVER

Not in the garage, even with the door open. Not in the house, a porch or a carport. A generator in an attached garage was 19 times more likely to poison someone.

ALWAYS

Outside, 20+ feet from the house and away from windows, doors and vents, with the exhaust pointed away from the house.

2 CO alarms first

About 85 to 100 Americans die every year from portable generator carbon monoxide.

- [ ] Battery-backup CO alarm on every level.
- [ ] One outside each sleeping area.
- [ ] Test them before you need them.
- [ ] Pick a generator with an automatic CO shutoff.

3 Don't run it all night

Run it to recharge your batteries, and let the batteries run the furnace and fridge the rest of the time.

~1.5 to 2 hrs × twice a day

About 1 to 1.5 gallons a day, roughly a fifth of what it burns running day and night.

- [ ] Charge one battery at a time to keep the load near half.
- [ ] Keep the batteries inside. They won't charge below freezing. Run only the cord outside.
- [ ] Deep cold: run it on gas. Charging two batteries at once on one 20-lb propane tank can freeze the tank.

4 Fuel: why dual fuel

Gas goes bad sitting in the garage. Propane keeps for years. After the 2011 quake in Japan, the region got about a third of its normal gasoline for two weeks. Plan on gas as the main fuel and propane as the backup.

FUEL	HOW TO KEEP IT	HOW MUCH TO STORE (LEHI FD GUIDANCE)
Gasoline	Add stabilizer. Rotate it yearly.	25 gal total · max 10 in an attached garage · none in a basement
Propane	Sealed 20-lb tanks keep for years.	Up to five 20-lb tanks · in a detached shed

5 Test it the first week

About 1 in 8 reviews of ours are 1-star: CO sensor shutdowns, hard propane starts, a miswired outlet. Find out now, not in the dark.

- [ ] Start it on gas.
- [ ] Start it on propane.
- [ ] Test every outlet you plan to use.
- [ ] Charge a battery off it.
- [ ] Weigh a propane tank after an hour, so you know your real fuel use.

6 Hooking it to the house

Want it to run your house circuits directly?

- [ ] Never plug it into a wall outlet. Backfeeding can kill line crews.
- [ ] Have an electrician install a listed transfer switch, or an interlock kit made for your panel, with an inlet.
- [ ] Ask the city if it needs a permit.

THE ONE WE BOUGHT

A-iPower GXSC7100iRD dual-fuel inverter

Gas or propane · remote, electric and recoil start · 120/240 V · built-in CO sensor · Costco.com, $999.99 ($300 off, was $1,299.99) on Nov 5, 2026, deal listed through 11/30/26.

If anyone feels dizzy, sick or headachy while it's running, get everyone outside into fresh air and call 911.

Sources: CDC, CPSC, Lehi Fire Department, RIETI. Price checked Nov 5, 2026. Not sponsored, no affiliate links. Estimates, not advice.