

SAFETY SENSE

Outdoor Power Equipment Helps Weather a Storm or Power Outage

(NAPS)—Storms can strike at any time, so having the right outdoor power equipment on hand and keeping safety in mind is important, says the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI). Home and business owners should think ahead, says OPEI, before foul weather or a power outage occurs.

“Any season can be storm season,” says Kris Kiser, President & CEO of OPEI, an international trade association representing manufacturers and suppliers of outdoor power equipment, small engines, battery power systems, portable generators, utility and personal transport vehicles, and golf cars. “It’s smart to invest in portable and whole house generators and to have other outdoor power equipment on hand such as chainsaws and water pumps to mitigate any damage from felled trees and water damage and floods.”

He notes that outdoor power equipment is evolving. “There’s a power source for every need including battery/electric, propane, solar and gasoline,” he says, noting each has different maintenance and care requirements. “It’s important that you know how to safely operate your equipment. And, remember, always read and follow the manufacturer’s manual and never disable safety features.”

To get ready for inclement weather, homeowners should follow these tips.

One, identify which equipment is needed before a storm. Chainsaws or pole saws can trim limbs and shrubs ahead of a storm and handle clearing. String trimmers, pruners and chainsaws can remove combustible material from around your home, making it less vulnerable to wildfires.

A portable generator powers key appliances and charges cell phones when utilities go down. A whole house generator can keep the lights and appliances on and running. Before an outage, plan where the generator will be set up (never in a home or garage, and always away from your home and any air intake) and determine how to secure it if needed. Buy and install a carbon monoxide detector. Get outdoor-rated extension cords for portable generators and consider adding an approved generator cover for rainy weather.

Water pumps can get water and muck out of basements and homes. Be sure you know how to operate the



Proper preparation and power equipment can help you protect your property from the problems of bad weather.

pump. Never pump substances that your equipment is not designed to cope with. Pay attention to avoid overheating and follow all safety precautions.

A utility type vehicle can transport people and supplies quickly in an emergency. Keep the vehicle stable and drive slowly. Do not turn mid-slope or while on a hill. Consider taking a UTV safety course.

Two, always read and follow the safety and usage recommendations provided by outdoor power equipment manufacturers. Never disable safety features. Practice how to operate equipment before you need it—not until an emergency is at hand. Follow all recommended safety measures on the product as well as in the owner’s manual.

Three, have the right fuel on hand and charge batteries ahead of an outage. Most gasoline-powered equipment uses E10 or less fuel and most manufacturers recommend adding a fuel stabilizer. Fuel that is more than 30 days old may phase separate and cause running problems, so it’s important to purchase fuel just ahead of a storm. Store fuel safely and use only an approved fuel container, and only manufacturer-recommended batteries.

Four, pay attention to your energy level and health. Preparation for bad weather, a power outage and storm cleanup can be taxing. Do not operate power equipment when tired or overly fatigued. Drink plenty of water and take regular breaks. Always use safety equipment like chaps, gloves, eye protection and hearing protection.

Five, always keep children and pets away from operating outdoor power equipment.

Learn More

For further facts and tips, visit www.opei.org.