Re: Storm Management: Temporary Residential Generator Installations

During major outages, homeowners often feel intense pressure to restore electricity to protect their home and family. **This is when conditions become most dangerous**. Under stress, people may attempt electrical connections they would never consider under normal circumstances, increasing the risk of electrocution, fire and carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

Ontario has seen multiple CO-related deaths during severe weather events, including during the 2025 spring ice storm when two residents and their pets died of suspected CO exposure. These tragedies underscore a critical point: standby power must be planned and installed safely — before an outage occurs.

The key message for homeowners: Safe standby power options exist, but they should be developed in advance and implemented with the help of a Licensed Electrical Contractor (LEC). **Planning ahead — not improvising during an emergency — saves lives**.

Key Safety and Compliance Considerations:

1. **Generator Placement is Non-Negotiable**: Operate generators outdoors only, well clear of doors, windows and air intakes. CO is colourless, odourless and deadly. Improper placement has caused fatalities in Ontario during storm-related outages.

2. **Use Only Approved Extension Cords**: Use undamaged, properly rated cords sized for the load and length. Undersized or damaged cords increase shock and fire risk.

3. **Certification Matters — Even Temporarily**: All electrical equipment used in Ontario must be approved to a recognized Canadian standard set out in Section 2 of Ontario Regulation 438/07. Non-approved generators or accessories are unacceptable under the **Ontario Electrical Safety Code (OESC), Rule 2-024**.

4. **Match the Load to the Generator**: Confirm generator capacity before connecting loads. Energize loads one at a time and monitor the generator to prevent overload conditions.

5. **Absolutely No Back-Feeding**: Temporary generator power is limited to approved plug-in loads only. Never connect a generator to panels, switches or service equipment without an approved transfer mechanism. Illegal back-feeding endangers utility workers and is a serious violation of the **OESC, Rule 14-612**.

6. **Plan for Safe Standby Power**: Safe options include permanent whole home transfer systems, portable generators paired with a manual transfer switch or meter-mounted solution, as well as extension cords when used correctly.

The common requirement across all options: planning and involvement of an LEC. LECs play a critical role in helping homeowners understand safe and compliant standby power options, plan for emergencies before they occur and ensure installations protect occupants, workers and first responders.

Additional Resources and Training References:

- **ESA Flash Notice 25-15 FL (*Use of temporary portable generators*)**: ESAsafe.com/assets/files/esasafe/pdf/Electrical_Safety_Products/Flash_Notices/25-15-FL.pdf
- **ESA Generator Safety Resources**: ESAsafe.com/safety/storm-safety/generator-safety/