

# STANDBY GENERATOR INSTALLATION FOR OPTIONAL BACKUP POWER ONLY



A hard-wired generator must be installed on a concrete pad.

A permanent hard-wired generator or transfer switch/isolation device for a portable generator are two options for providing backup power to a home during Public Safety Power Shutoffs or areawide electricity outages. To install either, you must first request a **Safety Assessment** from the City's Building Division, and the installations must meet the requirements outlined in this bulletin.

**IMPORTANT:** If the installation requirements below are not met, a Safety Assessment cannot be issued. In that case, you will need to submit plans to obtain a building permit.

**NOTE:** Hard-wired generators/transfer switches/isolation devices are to be used **ONLY** during Public Safety Power Shutoffs or areawide electricity outages.

## HOW TO REQUEST A SAFETY ASSESSMENT

- 1. Make an appointment** using the Virtual Appointment System for [Simple Projects Permit Service](#). When you schedule the appointment, please write that you need a Safety Assessment for a standby by generator installation as the scope of work/project description.
- 2. Pay fee.** The Permit Specialist will give you an invoice for your permit fees along with your Safety Assessment/Permit Card. Once the payment is made, you can have the generator installed and schedule an inspection.
- 3. Install generator/transfer switch/isolation device.** The City recommends that homeowners or inexperienced contractors do not attempt this complex installation. Hire a licenced contractor with generator installation experience. The work must be performed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions as well as state electrical and mechanical codes.
- 4. Schedule an inspection** (see sidebar). The installer of the equipment should be present for the inspection, and ready to provide information as indicated in the list below. Incomplete information or incorrect installations will result in having to schedule and pay for a second inspection.

## INSTALLATION SPECIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

The City Inspector will review the electrical plan at the property site after you have the equipment installed. The equipment and installation must meet all of the following criteria:

- Generator/transfer switch/isolation device must be intalled per the manufacturer's installation instructions.
- Installation instructions must be available at time of inspection.
- Transfer switch/isolation device must be listed.
- Standby electrical load shall not exceed the generator kw rating.
- Never connect any generator (permanently installed or portable) to another power source, including PG&E power supply lines.

### Fee Information

A 1-hour Inspection Fee applies to this service. See the Fee Schedule at [www.sanjoseca.gov/buildingfees](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/buildingfees) for current fees.

Pay by credit card or check, and make payable to City of San José.

### To schedule an inspection

It's fastest to schedule online at [www.sjpermits.org](http://www.sjpermits.org). For assistance with scheduling, call the Permit Center at 408-535-3555.

### Safety First!

Never bring a generator of any kind indoors. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

### Development Services

#### Permit Center

San José City Hall  
200 E. Santa Clara St.  
San José, CA 95113  
408-535-3555

[www.sanjoseca.gov/permitcenter](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/permitcenter)

*continued >*

*For hard-wired generators only:*

- Natural gas pipe sizing calculations must be available to the Inspector.
- Generator cannot use diesel fuel.
- Generator sound level not to exceed 67 decibels at 23 feet from front of generator. If this requirement is exceeded, a Safety Assessment cannot be issued and a building permit is required.
- For health and safety purposes, generator placement must be in the rear or side yard, set back a minimum of 5 feet from both rear and side property lines.
- Generator must be installed on a 2500 PSI concrete pad: 4" thick with #3 rebar 18" O.C. At minimum the concrete pad must extend 6" beyond the sides of the generator.
- Generator must be attached to the concrete pad at each corner with 3/8" Stainless Steel ICC approved expansion anchors 2-5/16" nominal embedment.

### PG&E REQUIREMENTS

PG&E provides rules for generators at this webpage: <https://www.pge.com/backupgeneration>

PG&E's rules include these items:

- Ensure electricity from your generator does not flow or "backfeed" into PG&E's power lines.
- Call PG&E at 1-800-743-5000 to inform them of your backup system. PG&E workers will then be aware of your generator when working on an outage in your area.

#### Permits and Inspections

- Help keep your property safe
- Help assure the quality of your investment to improve your property
- Are required by law

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