

Operate Generators Wisely

By Ron Schultz

It is that time of year when the weather starts changing. We should all have a plan and an outage kit available in the event of a power outage.

Klickitat PUD works hard to keep outages to a minimum and restore power quickly. However, widespread outages resulting from severe storms can prevent power restoration for several days.

Many customers have portable generators or fixed generators at their homes and businesses to use during a power outage or emergency. Using and installing a generator correctly protects not only you, but also KPUD line crews.

A generator without a properly installed transfer switch can backfeed along the power line and electrocute or injure anyone coming into contact with it, including our lineworkers who might be making repairs.

The PUD's distribution lines carry voltages of 12,470 volts between phases, and 7,200 volts if measured to ground. When a generator connected to the supply voltage source is unintentionally connected to the PUD system, the same transformer that steps down the voltage to your home or business steps up the voltage to the PUD delivery voltage. This creates a dangerous—and possibly deadly—situation should

someone contact that line.

KPUD recommends you have any generator transfer switch installation done by a licensed and bonded electrical contractor. The installation must be inspected by a state electrical inspector.

When using a generator, remember the following tips.

- Ensure extension cords connected to the generator are in good condition and are rated for the load they intend to carry. The cord should have a grounding plug.

- Connect only essential equipment and appliances to the generator. Do not overload the generator.

- Only use the generator in a well-ventilated environment, as high carbon monoxide levels can be produced quickly and can be deadly.

- Use a ground-fault circuit-interrupter to prevent shocks and electrocution.

- Keep children away from the generator at all times.

- Store fuel safely away from the generator, living areas and any sources of combustion. Ensure fuel is in properly labeled containers suitable for the type of fuel contained.

- Turn off the generator and make sure it has cooled before refueling.

- Have a fully charged fire extinguisher near the generator. Make sure it is properly rated to extinguish any fuel sources that could ignite. ■



WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT, KEEP YOUR GENERATOR OUTSIDE

Portable back-up generators produce the poison gas carbon monoxide (CO). CO is an odorless, colorless gas that kills without warning. It claims the lives of hundreds of people every year and makes thousands more ill. Follow these steps to keep your family safe.

PORTABLE GENERATORS

- ✓ Never use a generator inside your home or garage, even if doors and windows are open.
- ✓ Only use generators outside, more than 20 feet away from your home, doors, and windows.

CO DETECTORS

- ✓ Install battery-operated or battery back-up CO detectors near every sleeping area in your home.
- ✓ Check CO detectors regularly to be sure they are functioning properly.

CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) POISONING



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Why Do My Lights Blink?

This is a frequent question asked at your electric utility. Blinking lights usually are the result of momentary outages that occur when some type of disturbance exists on the line. This could be a lightning strike, an automobile striking a power pole, or an animal or other object coming in contact with an energized power line.

Because today's microprocessors are so intolerant, brief outages are more noticeable than they were in the past. When lights blink, it can indicate our equipment is operating properly. Blinking lights reflect the operation of equipment that protects the lines and keeps the power from going off for more than just a moment.

Klickitat PUD's distribution system includes special devices called reclosers, which operate much like a switch or a self-resetting circuit breaker. When there is a short circuit on the line, the recloser interrupts the flow of electricity. If the short circuit is temporary, which is often the case, the recloser permits power to continue flowing through the line with only a brief interruption of service—meaning your lights blink.

Without this device, every short circuit—temporary or otherwise—would

cause the power to be off until Klickitat PUD could send a lineman to restore service. These reclosers usually operate automatically three times before stopping the flow of electricity and causing a power outage. The recloser operation protects the lines from damage.

A word of caution: If you have lights blinking on a continuous basis, it may indicate a problem, and you should contact our office. While we strive to deliver steady, consistent and high-quality power, circumstances beyond our control sometimes cause power disturbances. Note the date and time when your lights are blinking. This information helps Klickitat PUD employees identify issues.

For protection of your valuable appliances and sensitive electronic equipment, we recommend protective power quality devices. An estimated 80 percent of power quality problems originate inside the home. Culprits include motors starting up or shutting down, improper electrical wiring and grounding, and overloaded circuits.

If you experience continuous blinks or improper power quality, please check the electrical equipment and wiring in your house first, but call us anytime. We are always here and happy to help you. ■

Watch for Back-to-School Kids

On average, 26 children in the United States are killed every year while getting on or off a school bus, or while waiting at the bus stop. To avoid such tragedies, please:

- ▶ Carefully back out of driveways. Watch for children walking to the bus stop.
- ▶ Slow down. Watch for children walking in the street and playing or congregating near bus stops—especially in the early morning hours, when it may still be dark.
- ▶ Be alert. Children arriving late for the bus may dart into the street without looking.
- ▶ Obey the law. Yellow flashing lights on a bus mean motorists should slow down and prepare to stop. Red flashing lights mean motorists must stop their cars and wait until the red lights stop flashing, the extended stop sign is withdrawn and the bus starts moving again. Unless there is a median, oncoming traffic also must stop.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

October

5-7—Shaniko Ragtime and Vintage Music Festival, 1 to 10 p.m., Shaniko Schoolhouse
5-7—The Wizard of Oz, Friday and Saturday, 7 p.m.; Sunday, 3 p.m., Richland High School auditorium

6—Concours de Maryhill Open Car Show, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Maryhill Museum of Art, Goldendale

6—Carlene Carter in Concert, 7 p.m., The Granada Theatre, The Dalles

6—Mid-Columbia Duck Race, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Columbia Park, Kennewick

6—Kriekfest: Cherry Beers (and Ciders and Wine), 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Waterfront Park, Hood River

6—Rustler's Rendezvous, 5:30 to 9 p.m., Columbia Gorge Discovery Center & Museum, The Dalles

9—KPUD Commissioners' meeting, 2 p.m., Goldendale

12—Bluegrass Beatles in Concert, 7 p.m., The Granada Theatre, The Dalles

12-14—Hood River Valley Harvest Fest, Friday, 1 to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Hood River Waterfront

13—Second Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Western Antique Aeroplane & Automobile Museum, Hood River

13—Murder Mystery Wine Dinner, 6 to 8 p.m., Desert Wind Winery, Prosser

13—Western Music and Cowboy Poetry concert, 6:30 to 9 p.m., Columbia Center for the Arts, Hood River

13—Hot Import Nights, 5 to 11 p.m., Portland Expo Center

14—African Children's Choir Concert, 7 p.m., Kennewick High School Fuller Auditorium

15—African Children's Choir Concert, 7 p.m., Columbia Basin College Theatre, Pasco

19-21—White Salmon Fall Art Walk, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., downtown White Salmon, whitesalmonartscouncil.org

20-21—Gorge Fruit and Craft Fair, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Hood River County Fairgrounds
21—Renken Farms Harvest Fest, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Three Mile Road, The Dalles

23—KPUD Commissioners' meeting, 2 p.m., Goldendale

26-27—Fall Bazaar, Friday, noon to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Kennewick Valley Grange No. 731

26-28—Columbia Gorge Fiber Festival, Friday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Fort Dalles Readiness Center

27—Fall Carnival, 2 to 5 p.m., John Dam Plaza, Richland