

should not be used after other people have gone to bed in the campground.

Many new portable gensets actually use an alternator similar to the one in your car to produce low voltage AC (alternating current) that is rectified to form DC (direct current). The DC is then fed to an electronic device called an inverter that converts it to reliable 120-volt 60-cycle alternating current. The output of the inverter is frequency controlled and voltage controlled. As less current is drawn from the output of the generator, the engine slows down resulting in less noise and fuel consumed. As more current is needed to operate your appliances, the engine speeds up. We must remember to start the generator first before turning on any electrical appliances. If you try to start the generator with the appliances connected, it is like trying to push a car up a hill.

Portable generators do not have an external exhaust system so they cannot be operated indoors or in the storage compartment of your RV. Before starting, they must be removed from the storage compartment and placed in a suitable location in the open air, preferably at a reasonable distance away from people. I often recommend using an extension cord and a padlock to chain your expensive generator to a tree.

When hydrocarbon fuels like gasoline are consumed, they give off carbon monoxide if there is insufficient air for proper combustion. Every year, people die from carbon monoxide poisoning from exposure to the exhaust gases from portable generators. Carbon monoxide is a gas that you cannot smell or see, and it can linger in an area for hours even after the generator is shut off. Protect yourself and your family by installing carbon monoxide alarms in your home, RV, or the cabin of a boat - and if the CO detector is powered by batteries you should change them twice a year - I do this in the spring and the fall when the time changes.

There are many brands of portable generators - the most common are Honda, Hyundai, Yamaha, Kipor, Generac, Champion, Coleman, ETQ, Ryobi, and Honeywell. These range in output from 400 watts to more than 4000 watts. More powerful generators are larger and heavier. Remember that just

because a generator has handles, it may not be that portable.

Briggs & Stratton

Briggs & Stratton generators are sold by Sears in 3000 to 5000-watt sizes. The 3500-watt generator is mounted in a frame with two wheels to make it portable. At 156-pounds this is a unit that you would have to leave in the bed of your truck.

Champion

Champion 7100i inverter models are sold through Canadian Tire. They are rated at 900 watts with a maximum output of 1000 watts, and powered by a 53.5 cc OHV gas engine. It can also deliver 5 amperes at 12 volts DC. Weighing only 31 pounds, it has a 2.6 litre fuel capacity. Champion builds generators up to 4000 watts of power.



7100i

Eastern Tools & Equipment

The Eastern Tools & Equipment ETQ 800i generator has a 38cc 1.5hp engine with low oil shut off protection. The Smart generators engine output is controlled through an onboard computer monitoring the demand output. Its advanced inverter design produces a clean pure sine wave of power that is great for powering sensitive computer power supplies and other electronics. It has a one-piece solid case with built-in handle that ensures quiet operation and the ultimate in portability. This 27-pound portable has a wattage output of 750 watts - that is enough to power a small microwave or TV and video player. Other sizes are available from 1000 to 3500 watts. Sold at Walmart, Sam's Club and Amazon.



EFOY by SFC

For RVers who store their trailers and motorhomes in an area where there is no power to charge batteries, the SFC EFOY fuel cell generator is ideal. A bit pricey, but when purchasing a new RV the cost is not out of line with other accessories that you might have installed before taking delivery. The EFOY produces 12-volt dc power to charge batteries from methanol fuel. The EFOY starts automatically when the battery terminal voltage drops down below a set value and runs until the battery is back up to charge. When it is running, it produces carbon dioxide, water and hot air as waste products. These must be vented to the outside. The fuel cell is twelve inches high and needs to be installed in a dry area of the RV such as under a dinette seat or in an outside compartment. The methanol fuel cartridge comes in 5 litre containers that are available from the RV Care network of dealers in Canada. SFC's CEO, Peter Podesser said the company has sold 20,000 of the units, and the units have already logged a collective 8 million operating hours in Europe.

Generac

Generac's iX Series inverter technology takes the raw power produced by the generator and passes it through a special electronic microprocessor to provide



iX1600