Rolling Blackouts and Portable Generators
A Message From UCSD Fire Marshal
Richard Benton

Well, here we are in the 21st century, and, without assigning blame anywhere, as warmer weather approaches we’re facing having the sort of unreliable electrical power often associated with a “third world country.” Progress!

Many people have taken a proactive stance and acquired a portable generator for use during blackouts. Originally, portable generators only had female outlets, intended for use by the owner plugging appliances (refrigerators, freezers, lights, etc.) into the generator. It took a little bit of ingenuity to connect a generator to an outlet in your house. Now, however, many generators come equipped with male connectors that can be plugged into the outlet of a building.

There’s a hidden hazard associated with connecting generators and house wiring systems.

First, when the power goes off, in order to provide power to your home only and not to everyone in your neighborhood, you’ll need to turn off the main circuit breaker for your house—this is usually (but not always—if unsure, contact an electrician) the big one at the top. You then fire up the “genny” and connect it to an outlet—voilà—stuff in your house works. Now, how are you going to know when power comes back on? OK, I’ll assume you somehow learned that power has been restored. You turn off the generator, and turn on the main circuit breaker.

continued on back...see Portable Generators

Skin Protection: Keeping Your Skin Healthy and Youthful
July 5, 12:00-1:00PM
Price Center
Santa Barbara Room

If you work or play outdoors, practice good sun sense. Join Environment, Health & Safety for one hour of information and tips that can save your skin.

Beat The Heat This Summer!

California’s energy crisis is predicted to become more critical this summer. Here are a few tips to conserve energy and beat the heat.

* Reduce office lighting wherever possible. Reduce reflective heat by controlling blinds. In buildings with operable windows, open windows and doors to create a cross breeze.
* Dress lightly and appropriately for your duties since air

continued on back...see Beat The Heat!
Campus Casualties

- Burns on the arms, hands and face resulted when tubes of nitric acid exploded, spilling acid on a researcher. Another lab worker pouring acetic acid into a bottle spilled some on his clothes, burning his leg and ankle.
- Bleach splashed into both eyes of a food service employee working in a kitchen.
- A health care employee strained his back while separating two patients who were fighting.
- During a lab cleanup, an employee sniffed the contents of a bottle containing an unknown chemical (trying to identify it) and became dizzy.
- A stagehand received a slight cut on the head when a person on a nearby ladder accidentally dropped a gel-frame on her.
- While accessing a dumpster, the latch on the dumpster lid struck the employee, cutting his head and causing dizziness.
- A campus recycling employee suffered a puncture wound to the arm when broken glass poked through a bag he was lifting.

Portable Generators...continued

Guess what? The generator—the one you forgot to unplug from the wall outlet, previously being turned by the gasoline engine in order to produce electrical power—now has a strong likelihood of becoming an electric motor, being powered by the house electricity. What’s worse, it’s driving the gasoline engine, in all likelihood, backwards! That can quickly cause failure of the engine, and, in some cases, has resulted in fuel being ejected from the engine into the surrounding area. An ensuing fire would certainly not be what you really wanted for the conclusion of the blackout.

Recommendations:

1. Use generators as originally intended: plug critical appliances, lights, etc., into the generator.
2. If you insist on connecting directly between the generator and your house wiring system, hire an electrician to install an “automatic transfer switch” (ATS) which provides automatic isolation between the electric company’s power and the output of the generator. If your generator has an electric starter, the ATS can probably automatically start (and maybe even stop) the generator.
3. If you insist on connecting directly between the generator and your house wiring system, and choose to not install an automatic transfer switch, it is critical that you disconnect the generator as well as turning it off before turning the main circuit breaker back on.

Safety Training Programs

EH&S Safety Training Days
1st & 3rd Thursday of every month.

See the schedule at http://www-ehs.ucsd.edu/training/train_sched.htm

An extensive array of safety training classes are offered:

- Injury & Illness Prevention Program (IIPP)
- Radiation, Biosafety, Chemical Safety
- Hazardous Waste Management
- Risk Management/Workers’ Compensation
- How to Maintain a Healthy Back
- Office and Laboratory Ergonomics
- Skin Protection/Sun Sense

Injury & Illness Prevention Program http://www-ehs.ucsd.edu/iipp/iipp.htm

Please register for IIPP courses by emailing Betty Thomas at bthomas@ucsd.edu.

All IIPP classes are 8:30-9:30 AM.

- July 5 ........ Price Center, Santa Barbara Room
- July 19 ........ Price Center, Santa Barbara Room
- August 2 ........ Price Center, Riverside Room
- August 16 ........ Price Center, Cove Room

Risk Management & Workers’ Compensation

http://www-ehs.ucsd.edu/riskmgmt/classes.htm

July 5, 9:30-10:30AM, Price Center-Santa Barbara Room

Learn how to manage costs related to work-related injuries, employment/general liability and auto accidents, thefts, flood and fire damage. Register for a class by emailing Scheryl Wade at swade@ucsd.edu, or call (858) 534-4237.

Beat The Heat!...continued

conditioning will probably be the first convenience to go during energy conservation efforts.

- Drink plenty of water. Depending on refrigeration, it may make sense to freeze bottles of water overnight so you have cool water on the thaw throughout the day.
- Running cool water over your wrists can actually help cool your core body temperature. Try using cool, wet packs on the back of the neck.
- Hand fans may actually make you warmer because of rapid physical motion. Slow down movement on hot days to conserve physical energy and reduce heat.
- Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables and other small, light meals to feel more comfortable on hot days.
- Wear sunblock and a hat to prevent sunburn and skin cancer when outdoors.