

# Safety Sense

## Weathering A Storm Or Power Outage Safely

(NAPS)—Having the right outdoor power equipment on hand year-round is important—in more ways than many people realize. That's according to the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), which advises home and business owners to grow familiar with safe operating procedures and think ahead before foul weather or a power outage disrupts life.

“It's important to be prepared year-round given any season can be storm season. We see more people investing in portable and whole-house generators and having other outdoor power equipment on hand such as chainsaws and water pumps to mitigate any damage from felled trees and water damage and floods,” says Kris Kiser, President & CEO of OPEI, an international trade association representing manufacturers and suppliers of outdoor power equipment, small engines, battery power systems, portable generators, utility and personal transport vehicles and golf cars.

He notes that outdoor power equipment is becoming faster, lighter, more efficient and more technologically advanced. “There's a power source for every need including battery/electric, propane, solar and gasoline,” he adds, noting each has different maintenance and care requirements. “Always read and follow the manufacturer's manual.”

### What You May Need

To get ready for inclement weather, identify which equipment is needed. Chainsaws or pole saws can trim limbs and shrubs ahead of a storm and handle clearing. String trimmers, pruners and chainsaws can also remove combustible material from around your home, making it less vulnerable to wildfires.

A portable generator will power key appliances and charge cell phones when utilities go down. A whole house generator can keep the lights and appliances on and running. Before an outage, plan where the generator will be set up (never in a home or garage, and always away from your home and any air intake) and determine how to secure it if needed. Buy and install a carbon monoxide detector, too. Get outdoor-rated extension cords for portable generators and consider adding an approved cover to your generator for rainy weather.

Water pumps can help get water and muck out of basements and other parts of your home. Be sure you know how to oper-



**When storms create trouble, power equipment properly used can bring things back to where they should be.**

ate it. Never pump substances that your equipment is not designed to cope with. Pay attention to avoid overheating and follow all safety precautions.

A utility type vehicle can transport people and supplies quickly in an emergency. Keep the vehicle stable and drive slowly. Do not turn mid-slope or while on a hill. Consider taking a safety course.

Always read the directions provided by outdoor power equipment manufacturers and be sure to follow all manufacturer's safety and usage recommendations before you need the equipment—don't wait for an emergency. Practice how to operate equipment. Save a digital copy of the owner's manual on your computer if possible, so it can easily be consulted in the future.

Make sure to have the right fuel on hand and charge batteries ahead of an outage. Gasoline-powered equipment uses E10 or less fuel and most manufacturers recommend adding a fuel stabilizer. Fuel that is more than 30 days old may phase separate and cause running problems, so it's important to purchase fuel just ahead of a storm. Store fuel safely and use only an approved fuel container.

One of the most important things operators can do for safety is to pay attention to energy levels and health. Preparation for bad weather, a power outage and storm clean-up can be taxing. Do not operate power equipment when tired or overly fatigued. Drink plenty of water and take regular breaks. Always use safety equipment such as chaps, gloves, eye protection and hearing protection.

### Learn More

For further facts and tips, visit [www.OPEI.org](http://www.OPEI.org).