

What's the Risk?

Backfeeding Electricity with Generators



THE ISSUE

A transfer switch must be used when a generator is supplying electricity to any type of building during a power outage. A transfer switch, whether automatic or manual, isolates the building from the utility power grid and eliminates the risk of backfeeding electricity.



WHAT'S THE RISK?

Improperly connecting a generator to supply electricity can result in an extremely dangerous situation called backfeeding. This occurs when electricity from a generator is allowed to flow back to the power grid through the building's electrical system. This can result in electrocution of utility workers performing repairs.



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Property owners must isolate their generated electrical power supply from the utility power grid using an approved transfer switch installed by a professional.

There are two types of transfer switches.

Manual

Generally, these are found next to the main electrical panel and require someone to physically operate them. When activated, the switch isolates the property from the utility power grid enabling only the generator to supply electricity to the building(s). When power is restored to the utility electrical grid, the switch must be manually reversed to enable electricity to flow from the utility power grid and not the generator.

Automatic

An automatic transfer switch uses technology to sense the drop of utility power and automatically start the generator. It also isolates the incoming utility electrical feed and transfers the load to the generator. The automatic transfer switch will do the same in reverse when it senses the utility power has been restored.

