

## **STANDBY GENERATORS: WARNING!**

If you are planning to purchase a standby generator as a back up power source during power outages, remember, improper generator hookup can create serious problems in safety and service.

It is very important that your generator has the proper transfer or double throw switch. This switching device is used to transfer the electric service from the power line to the generator. If it is not used, feedback from the generator voltage onto the power lines could electrocute linemen working to restore your power. When regular electric service has been restored, a double throw switch can also prevent power from flowing back in and destroying your generator. Use of these types of transfer switches is also a requirement of the National Electrical Code.

### **GENERATOR SAFETY**

A backup generator can be a nice thing to have in case of a power failure and for some people, such as those dependent on life-support equipment, a backup generator is essential. Whether you need a generator or simply enjoy its convenience, it's important to keep it in good working order and use it safely to get the maximum benefit from your investment. These tips can help you maintain and operate your generator safely:

- ◆ Know your generator! Read all the information on installation, safety and maintenance, and follow instructions regarding maintenance and testing.
- ◆ When you need to use the generator, first turn off the main power switch or breaker in your home.
- ◆ Use it wisely. Don't overload the generator. It should be used only when necessary, and only to power essential equipment. Do not exceed the rated capacity of the generator. Overloading it can cause damage to the generator and the appliance connected to it. Overloading can also cause wear and tear and could present fire and safety hazards.
- ◆ Plug appliances directly into generator itself or have a transfer or double throw switch installed. Don't try to wire your home's electrical system into the generator. Have a qualified electrician or call the electric cooperative to install a double throw switch.
- ◆ Take care when fueling your generator! Never try to refuel the unit while it's operating. Avoid spilling gasoline or other fuels on hot components. This could cause an explosion!
- ◆ Provide adequate ventilation and air-cooling for the generator to prevent overheating and the accumulation of toxic exhaust fumes. Don't run generators indoors. Always run generators outside, downwind of structures and as far away as possible. Deadly carbon monoxide gas from the generator's exhaust can spread throughout enclosed spaces.

If you are planning to install and use a standby generator and have questions about installation and the use of a double throw switch, please contact your Bluestem office.