



Stand-by Generators

Stand-by generators are becoming more common in Wilmette. Here are some common questions and answers regarding generators.

Do I need a permit to install a generator?

Yes, a permit is required to install a permanent stand-by generator. For the permit application, please submit the following to the Community Development Department:

- Completed building permit application, including owner name, property address, applicant name and contact, and contractor information
- 2 copies of manufacturer's specification data on both the transfer switch and the generator set and noise output
- 2 copies of a hookup diagram
- 2 copies of the plat of survey showing the location of the unit and the proposed setback to the closest lot lines

Depending on the electrical conditions in the home, additional information related to electrical work may be required. Electrical service must be code compliant in order to install a permanent stand-by generator. Two inspections are required to install a

generator. The electrician must be present at the time of inspection.

What are the restrictions on installing and using a generator?

Setbacks

For residential installations, generators may not be located in a front yard or side yard adjoining a street. Generators may be not closer than 15' from side and rear lot lines.

Noise Level

Generators are permitted to operate in normal or full load up to 70 decibels at any lot line. Generators are to be maintained by the owner so that this limit is not exceeded throughout the life of the unit.

Testing Periods

Testing of equipment is limited to a maximum of 30 minutes in any seven day period. Testing is to be conducted Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.



What if I can't meet the setback requirements?

A unit that is proposed to be located in a required front yard or side yard adjoining a street or less than 15' but more than 5' from a side or rear lot line may be reviewed by the Site Plan Review Committee. This process takes approximately 4 weeks and involves notification to neighbors who have an opportunity to comment on the application. There is also a separate application and filing fee. Requests that are denied through Site Plan Review may be appealed to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

A request to locate a unit less than 5' from a side or rear lot line must be heard by the Zoning Board of Appeals.



It is important to note that most residential generators cannot meet the 70 decibel limit when located less than 15' from a lot line. If a unit cannot meet the 70 decibel limit, the request must be heard by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

How do you determine if my unit will comply with the 70 decibel limitation?

The staff takes the baseline dimension and noise output from the manufacturer's information and uses an Internet calculator to determine the noise at the proposed setback.

What if I want to use sound-deadening material or other screening to reduce the noise level?

The staff will determine the anticipated noise level as described above. If the unit cannot meet the 70 decibel limit, the unit will have to be sited in a location farther from the lot line or a noise variation will need to be sought. The noise limit is based on the manufacturer's information about the unit. Because the staff cannot determine the effectiveness of sound-deadening material, it will not be considered by staff when determining the noise output of the unit.

Are there any other requirements?

The building code requires that a generator may be no closer than 5' to operable windows. Also, the following signage must be placed on the meter fitting: "Warning! This house has a second means of power: generator"

Do I need a permit to use a portable generator?

A permit is not required to use a portable generator.

Who do I talk to if I still have questions?

Please contact the Community Development Department at (847) 853-7550 or comdev@wilmette.com.

