

How to Store Gasoline for an Emergency

By eHow Contributor

If the power goes out or mother nature forces you to evacuate you may need an emergency supply of gasoline. Extra gas will keep your generator running or keep your vehicle running when the gas stations go dry. The following will discuss how to safely store an extra supply of gasoline. [Does this Spark an idea?](#)

For safe storage you will need an UL listed and FM approved gasoline safety can. These cans will be made from heavy galvanized steel. Important features include:

- * galvanized steel construction resistant to physical abuse
- * full handle allow easy pouring and carrying heavy load
- * positive pressure relief cap vents automatically to prevent rupture or explosion in case of fire
- * spring loaded self closing lid prevents spills and controls vapor
- * internal flame arrestor prevents flashback ignition

Choose between the type 1 and type 2 safety cans. Type 1 cans have one opening for pouring/filling. Type 2 cans have one spout with a flexible metal hose for filling and a separate opening for filling. Type 1 cans will be less expensive.

Cans should be filled to 95% of capacity. This will allow room for the gasoline to expand due to higher temperatures.

If you plan to store the gasoline for more than a few months you should add a preservative such as Sta-Bil. Add the preservative to the fresh gasoline when the tank is filled. The makers of Sta-Bil state their product will preserve gasoline for 12 months or, if you double the dose, two years. Preservatives will NOT restore spoiled gasoline.

Do not store gasoline in or near the house. The gasoline should be stored in a separate well ventilated area with no electrical equipment or open flames.

Fuel Storage

- Avoid storing fuel in your generator's tank. It will break down within a few weeks and form gums and varnish in your fuel system that will clog your carburetor. Always store gas someplace away from your generator. Before storing gas, add a fuel stabilizer to extend the storage life. Fuel stabilizers are sold in hardware, home supply, automotive, and outdoor equipment stores. With stabilizer, gasoline can last up to six months but preferably should be used within three months.

Amount of Fuel

- How much gas you store will depend on the fuel consumption rate of your generator. The higher the wattage of your generator, the more gas it will burn per hour of operation. Figure on using your generator six to eight hours out of each day. For typical household generators rated around 2,500 to 3,500 watts, 25 gallons is enough to sustain your critical systems for three to four days. Some municipalities limit the amount of gas you can store at home, so check with your local fire department. It's a good idea to rotate your fuel stock, putting the older gas in your other outdoor power equipment, refilling that can and putting it at the back of your fuel stash.

Type of Container

- Containers for your gasoline should be approved for flammable liquid storage. They should be of robust construction and designed to store your fuel in any weather, hot or cold. Never use milk jugs or other makeshift containers for your fuel store. Containers should be of a size and design that's relatively easy to handle and be able to dispense gasoline without splashing. Such cans typically hold 5 gallons. It's a good idea to have a small gas can of 1 or 2 gallons capacity that you fill from your large 5-gallon gas cans and then use to fill your generator's fuel tank.

Where to Store

- Never store gasoline in your house. Gasoline is dangerous. Keep your fuel store in a shed, free-standing garage, or other secure, well-ventilated outbuilding away from the house. In event of a house fire or a natural disaster that damages your house, you don't want to have gallons and gallons of highly-flammable liquid down in your basement. Never smoke or have any open flame in your fuel storage structure, and keep a fire extinguisher for flammable liquids on hand.