

Best rated inverter generators 2022

Nick Hilden writes reviews and recommendations coverage of fitness, outdoor and tech gear for Popular Science. He's spent over a decade writing about lifestyle and culture topics for a slew of publications, including Scientific American, the Los Angeles Times, Vice, and Men's Health, among others.

Popular Science started writing about technology more than 150 years ago. There was no such thing as "gadget writing" when we published our first issue in 1872, but if there was, our mission to demystify the world of innovation for everyday readers means we would have been all over it. Here in the present, PopSci is fully committed to helping readers navigate the increasingly intimidating array of devices on the market right now.

Our writers and editors have combined decades of experience covering and reviewing consumer electronics. We each have our own obsessive specialties--from high-end audio to video games to cameras and beyond--but when we're reviewing devices outside of our immediate wheelhouses, we do our best to seek out trustworthy voices and opinions to help guide people to the very best recommendations. We know we don't know everything, but we're excited to live through the analysis paralysis that internet shopping can spur so readers don't have to.

There are trade-offs, starting with deciding whether the higher price is worth it. But "if money isn't a big issue, I would choose an inverter over a conventional portable generator," says Dave Trezza, a Consumer Reports engineer who heads our generator testing program. "They're way quieter, and that can make a real difference when you're running it for hours at a time."

Not all inverter generators perform equally well, however. Under demanding conditions, some models fail to deliver the power that's promised, according to our tests.

CR members can read on for a list of top-rated inverter generators from each of the four size categories. For more shopping tips, you can also consult our generator buying guide.

Here's an important note on safety: Be sure to place your gasoline generator outdoors at least 20 feet from your house or other dwelling (including a garage), with the exhaust directed away from windows or doors to avoid deadly carbon monoxide poisoning.

Each of these inverter generator options has CO safety technology designed to stop the engine if carbon monoxide reaches certain limits in an enclosed space, a feature CR considers very important. All earn very good or excellent ratings in tests of that function.

Inverter generators in this size range, which are 220-volt capable, can produce 5,000 watts or more. This

means they can power most home appliances and, when hooked up to your electrical panel via a transfer switch or interlock device, enable you to run hardwired devices like a well pump or a water heater. For more information, see [Choosing the Right Size Generator](#).

These models produce 2,500 to 5,000 watts and can power an array of appliances, including a refrigerator. But because they lack a 220-volt connection, they can't be hooked up to a circuit breaker panel by a transfer switch. That prevents them from powering hardwired equipment.

These models produce 1,500 to 2,500 watts and can power a number of devices during an outage. The most compact models in this category are a good option for camping or tailgating.

The smallest inverters produce less than 1,500 watts and are designed primarily for camping and tailgating, although they can certainly power a few appliances or electronic devices when there's a power outage at home.

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Web: <https://hollanddutchtours.nl/contact-us/>

Email: energystorage2000@gmail.com

WhatsApp: 8613816583346

