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*Generator Systems, Engines, Pumps, Parts and Service*

## **NEW GENERATOR - F.A.Q.**

### **1. What do I have to do to take care of my generator once it is installed?**

- It is critical that your generator be properly maintained if it is to deliver the level of performance and reliability that you expected when you purchased it. Just like your automobile, the generator needs to be maintained with a simple mechanical maintenance schedule which includes oil changes, filter changes, battery maintenance, as well as checking a variety of electronic components and other items, much like an automobile checkup.
- R.A. Mitchell Company recommends that you have routine maintenance performed annually (at a minimum), or every 100 hours of operation, whichever comes first. We offer multiple maintenance programs that vary in the frequency of visits. A custom Planned Equipment Maintenance Agreement will be mailed/mailed to you, tailored to your generator and location approximately 7 – 9 months from the official startup and commissioning date of your new system. Properly maintaining your generator will ensure that it is ready to work when you need it the most.

### **2. How long does it take for the generator to turn on when a power outage occurs?**

- Your generator will start and the ATS will switch power to your home within 10-20 seconds. You will notice that the generator actually starts and runs for a few seconds before switching over. This allows the generator to adequately warm up and stabilize voltage before transferring the house electric load onto the generator set.

### **3. How long does it take the generator to turn off after the power comes back on?**

- As a precautionary measure, the generator will continue to run for an additional 3 minutes after the power comes back on to ensure that the utility power is stable, as well as to allow the engine in the system to cool down before completely shutting off.

### **4. What does my Automatic Transfer Switch (ATS) do?**

- The automatic transfer switch (ATS) transfers power from a standard source, as in almost all cases utility power from the grid, to your generator power, when the utility source fails. An ATS senses the power interruption on the line and in turn signals the generator to start. When your utility power is restored, the ATS will then switch your home back to its standard source, which is your utility power.

### **5. Why does my generator need to test run (exercise) every week and what should I do if my generator fails to run during its weekly scheduled exercise?**

- Your generator is programmed to run for approximately 15 – 20 minutes every week at a pre-determined time (typically chosen by you when we do our factory startup), in order for the engine and all moving parts to stay properly lubricated and in good running condition. If you happen to notice your generator did not start during its weekly test, please call our Service Department IMMEDIATELY! This condition could be due to a dead battery or a possible fuel problem. If this is not reported to us, it is likely your generator WILL NOT start when needed during a power outage.

### **6. Should I be concerned during the winter months if snow builds up around my generator during a storm?**



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- YES!! Your generator requires air to start and run. There are louvers on each end, one for air INTAKE and one for EXHAUST. If either one of these get blocked by any object (most commonly snow), it is highly likely that your generator will not start when needed during a power outage or during a weekly exercise test. This may require a service call for one of our technicians to get the system up and running again. It is up you, as the homeowner, to ensure that the snow and/or ice around the generator is clear during/after snowstorms, and/or buildup throughout the season. A two foot cleared area around the generator is sufficient for proper air flow.

**7. Are there any precautions I should take if I am a seasonal resident or will be away from my home for an extended period of time?**

- If you spend an extended time away from your home, especially during the winter months and depend on your generator to provide backup power to a heating system or a sump pump for example, you may want to have a family member or “caretaker” designated who regularly checks on the property. This will hopefully ensure, as mentioned previously, that snow is removed from around the generator and that propane or diesel fuel tanks (if applicable) are full. Also, if a severe storm and/or power outage was to occur, that all systems are working properly to prevent against frozen pipes, a flooded basement and spoiled food.

**8. If I have a propane generator set, is there anything I need to monitor or anything else I need to do to ensure I will have adequate propane to get me through an outage?**

- If you have a propane generator set, R.A. Mitchell highly recommends you sign up for an “auto-fill” contract with your propane supplier. Kohler residential generators run off of propane vapor (not liquid gas), and when the temperatures drop, especially below 30 degrees Fahrenheit, the production of propane vapor inside your tank(s) drops considerably when compared to warmer temperatures. Most gensets will not start and be able to run for much time once your fuel tank is less than 20% full (and this number could be more like 30-35% once the temperature drops below 20 degrees F). Optimally, when there is a storm coming, you should contact your propane supplier as early as possible to confirm that your tanks will be/have been topped off prior to the storm. R.A. Mitchell unfortunately does not have a way to monitor your available fuel percentage, so we recommend that you call your propane supplier and have their number handy at all times. The afore-mentioned “auto-fill” contract with the propane suppliers around here is a great way to ensure you will not need to scramble to get tanks filled just before a huge forecasted snow/wind/Nor’Easter, or even a wind storm at any point during the year.