

5 tips to keep emergency generators performing in LTC facilities

Many long-term care and assisted living facilities take for granted certain elements of their life safety systems. There is an expectation that these systems will automatically activate without fail during an emergency. The danger of complacency and not performing the necessary "due diligence" as it relates to the installation and maintenance of your facility's generator(s) and emergency power systems can lead to catastrophic failures. Here are five tips to help ensure that your emergency power system performs to its maximum potential at all times:

1. Regularly monitor battery charge rates

Battery failure makes the generator incapable of starting when needed. Many battery problems are caused by dirty and loose connections so maintenance of the emergency generator's electrical system is critical. Cable connections need to be regularly cleaned and tightened. Monitoring the battery charge rates will establish a trend that can help map the potential for failure. An increase of current may indicate signs of a battery or charger malfunction. It should be checked monthly.

2. Inspect for fuel, oil or coolant leaks

Fuel, oil or coolant leaks can lead to failure to start, failure to keep running or severe and/or catastrophic failures such as fires or explosions. Each week the generator, all hoses and couplings and general area should be inspected to ensure that all levels are acceptable and that no leaks are present. All leaks found should be addressed immediately.

3. Periodically examine transfer switches

Failures of automatic transfer switches can cause the power derived from the generator not to reach the intended destination. Transfer switches should be examined periodically to ensure that they are operational.

4. Avoid over-filled fuel tanks

Over-filled fuel tanks during very hot days fuel can expand in the tanks and over top, causing a fire hazard and life safety hazard to anyone in the area when the fire or explosion occurs.

5. Investigate breaker trips

Breaker trips can cause the power derived from the generator not to reach the intended destination. This could be due to an electrical failure or short in the system or generator. Breaker trips should be investigated to determine cause and to ensure that it will not reoccur.

One of the best ways to ensure that your emergency generator system will perform at its peak at all times is to establish a service agreement with a reliable service contractor. The service agreement should clearly spell out all of the tasks the service technician will perform during a specific time frame (monthly, quarterly, annually) in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

Click [here](#) to read the article "Emergency Power—Danger in Complacency" published in *Continuity Central*, where these helpful tips were found. Please share this information with your maintenance team.

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