



10 Quick Tips for Generator Maintenance

As with any piece of equipment that provides power to other tools, the only time one seems to notice a generator is when it's not working. [Generators](#) get thrown around, beaten and abused, yet they're always expected to work with one pull. Even though they're built for abuse, generators won't last without some regular maintenance. Here are ten basic tips to keep your generator energized for each job:

1. Don't Be Foiled by Oil

Check the oil before each use. If it's a new generator, change the oil after the first 20 hours of use to remove assembly lube and metallic particles created during the break-in period. Otherwise change the oil every 100 hours.

2. Prevent Filthy Fuel

Dirty fuel is a result of improper storage or refilling tanks in dusty conditions. To prevent this problem, store fuel in an OSHA-approved receptacle and keep out of high traffic areas. Also, don't refill in windy conditions where dust is more prevalent.

3. Clear the Air

Check the condition of the air filter daily. Regardless of how dirty it is, clean the filter every 100 hours and change it monthly.

4. Keep it Clean

Cleaning the engine removes potentially harmful dirt and gives the operator a chance to spot service concerns. Never use a pressure washer as it could cause more harm than good. Instead, use warm water at a low pressure to rinse the engine and dry the outside immediately afterward.

5. On the Lookout for Leaks

Once the equipment is clean and dry, check for any signs of fuel leakage. If a leak is spotted, tighten the parts causing the leak or replace them immediately.

6. Hang Tight

Cleaning the engine will also help reveal any obvious damage and loose parts. Take time to tighten loose parts that could vibrate and potentially harm nearby components.

7. Don't Lose that Spark

Inspect the spark plugs every 50 hours for damage, dirt and excessive carbon build-up. If dirt or carbon build-up is found, clean with a wire brush or spark plug cleaner. Immediately replace any plugs with cracked porcelain.

8. Avoid Strainer Strain

Clean and inspect the fuel strainer and fuel filter every month. If there is sediment in the fuel strainer, shut off the fuel-line valve before cleaning. Then, remove, empty and clean the sediment bowl and clean the filter screen. If sediment has made its way into the tank, all fuel will need to be removed. Clean the residue from the sediment reservoir, which is the lowest point in the tank. Use a clean rag to wipe sediment from the filter element and the sides of the tank before refilling.

9. Annual Inspection

On an annual basis, take the time to conduct a general inspection of the generator, looking for any dirty, broken or misaligned parts. Furthermore, check the fuel hose each year and replace if there are cracks present.

10. Store it Properly

If the generator won't be used for more than 30 days, take special steps to protect the engine. First, conduct all suggested daily maintenance items. Then, remove the battery, clean the posts and ensure it's fully charged. Next, drain the fuel from the fuel tank and carburetor float chamber. To prevent corrosion in the cylinder bore, remove the spark plug and inject a few drops of oil through the plug hole. Gently pull the recoil starter knob two or three times before the spark plug is placed back in the plug hole. Additionally, pull the recoil starter knob until resistance is felt and leave in the position. End the process with a final cleaning, ensuring that all cooling air slots and openings are unobstructed. Place a protective cover around the generator and store in a dry place.

If the generator needs to be stored for an extended period of time, be sure to exercise it every two to three months. Start the generator and let it run for at least 10 minutes while carrying a load.