

Generator Considerations - What Customers should know.

Research and Background -

Search companies for the generator that works best for you and your needs. You will need to research companies, brands, sizes and types before you make a decision.

When choosing your generator, keep in mind the simplest questions that most people tend to forget:

Where will you put the generator?

Does the location affect the usability of your yard?

Just learning about the units are just a small part of the process. Things you will need to understand for final decision making and installation are as follows:

Propane measurements and usage requirements. This includes understanding bulk propane delivery units, tank sizes, headspace, vaporization rates at different temperatures, pressures, volumes and BTU's.

Propane company plans, renting versus owning the tanks, auto delivery and minimum usage.

Flammable gas piping requirements, materials, minimum distances from ignition sources, delivery access, flow rates, pipe sizes and burial requirements.

Generator site requirements, gravel versus poured concrete pads, minimum code required distance from windows and doors, and sound requirements.

Electrical code, load requirements, circuit panel capacity, wire gauges versus distance, pass through requirements, transfer switch requirements, and electric company rules.

Installation Process -

Calculate power requirements - The simplest way would be to add together the maximum amperage of the circuits you want to power and find a generator with enough capacity to run them all. A more accurate way to calculate this would be to add up the actual load on the circuits that you want to power then realistically estimate how often they would run at the same time. A power monitor can also be used to record the draw of the appliances you want to be able to use.

Make your final decision on the generator size.

Calculate gas flow requirements - You will need to find a gas company. Then decide which better suits your life style... to either rent or buy a tank. The gas company will give you a gas requirement. You then need to figure out how much gas you will need to run the generator depending on the temperature. Such as in a cold climate, the size of your tanks may be more of a function of ensuring an adequate gas flow during the minimum expected temperature than it is of how long you want the fuel to last.

Determine installation location - Once you know the tank size, you will need to figure out where to put both the generator and the tanks. If you do them at the same time you can easily calculate the piping too. Codes define a maximum length of pipe to be attached to a structure or run underground. Propane installers will also have to worry about codes for cylinder placement, minimum distances from ignition sources, such as electrical outlets, lighting, grills, etc. Don't forget that the generator itself is an ignition source too.

Apply for permits

Piping Install -

You should get the distance dimensions of the generator to the tanks. If underground, a trench would need to be dug. Either underground or structural, the pipes need to be compressed and capped. Then you will need to have a town inspector come in and inspect the pipes. If the pipes hold the compressed air, then you should be fine.

Generator Preparation and Wiring -

A pad or base needs to be installed and leveled. The generator put in place. You will need an electrician to put in a transfer switch (if applicable) and hook everything up.

Final Inspection -

You will need to have a town inspector come out and check to make sure everything had been done correctly to code.