



Backup generators are an indispensable tool for hotels and resorts

*Another great article from The Rooms Chronicle, the #1 journal for hotel rooms management! ***Important notice: This article may not be reproduced without permission of the publisher or the author.*** College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Niagara University, P.O. Box 2036, Niagara University, NY 14109-2036. Phone: 866-Read TRC. E-mail: editor@roomschronicle.com*

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For any hotel manager that strives to provide a memorable experience, everything the guest encounters, from the physical evidence (room decor) to the processes (check-in) to the performance of people (a friendly greeting) constitutes the service offered in fulfillment of the promise of a safe, comfortable and enjoyable stay. This experience must not be compromised despite a disruption in power output.

In any power outage, however, guests turn from annoyed to frustrated and finally to scared, while employees struggle to continue operations under an intense amount of confusion. Even hotels with seamless, well-thought-out emergency plans can be ill prepared for the “real thing.” This has been highlighted in recent power grid failures and weather disasters that have plagued various parts of North America.

Hotels and resorts must be ready to operate without power from any number of circumstances, including threatening weather, weakness in the power grid, and terrorist-related activities. The power grid has been a large concern over the years since demand has placed much stress on the system. An increase in the number of users and aging transmission lines has caused frequent “brownouts” in areas throughout North America. Weather-related outages can strike anywhere and at any time. From sizzling temperatures in the summer, to hurricanes that pummel coastal resorts, and even icy conditions in the winter, weather can cripple the power grid in every geographic location.

Hotels should plan accordingly and include a backup power resource in their business continuity strategy. Considering that so much of a hotel’s infrastructure is tied to a property management and accounting system, it is even more imperative to ensure a constant flow of supplemental power throughout the facility, no matter how long the grid may be down. This strategy will help guests remain safe throughout the duration of the outage and ensure a consistent and satisfactory guest experience. Though certain hotel functions may need to be scaled back during a power outage, guests will certainly appreciate the lengths that hotel management has undertaken during what is most likely a confusing and uncomfortable scenario.

As hotels’ power requirements have grown over the years, so have the capabilities of today’s backup power generators. In the past generators were used primarily to support emergency systems, but today’s versions are tasked to power everything from water-treatment facilities, food and beverage operations, security measures and high-speed Internet systems. During the August 2003 blackout that affected 50 million customers in the Northeast, some hotels completely lost access to a potable water supply, including running water for sanitary facilities. For an industry based solely on the customer experience, essential guest needs must not be compromised despite a major power failure.

Moreover, many hotels are calling on backup power generators for service even when there isn’t a power outage or threat of a storm. Guests use the services of a hotel for a wide variety of activities today. Generators can provide an additional source of power for events such as large meetings, beautiful wedding ceremonies or lavish receptions. Hotel operators also use generators to power critical political events, such as when world leaders hold conferences at the resort.

Pictured below: Commercial-grade, backup power generators keep guests safe and comfortable during power outages that take place in every part of North America.



Hotels and resorts should understand that a successful backup power system is more than just a generator itself. A high quality transfer switch and a plentiful supply of operating fuel are just as critical as the generator. Transfer switches are the components that transfer the distribution of power from the traditional source to the generator when the power is interrupted or knocked out entirely. Since today's hotels and resorts have operations that are dependent on large computer systems, having a reliable transfer switch that immediately links over to the backup generator is one of the most critical elements to maintaining information flow, data preservation, and uncompromised service standards.

Of particular importance is the fact that hotel and resort owners and operators throughout the United States are susceptible to power failure. Although hurricane season often places more emphasis on the Southeastern and Gulf states, the delicate power grid and potential threat of terrorist activity gives cause for every owner and operator to be cognizant of their backup generator resources. ✧

(Eric Johnston is vice president of Americas Generators, a leading supplier of commercial-grade backup power generators, transfer switches and fuel for the hospitality industry. The company has a full inventory of a variety of models and accessories, available for immediate delivery. For sales information, visit www.gopower.com. Eric may be reached at: eric@gopower.com.)