

Generator Tips

If the motor home is connected to shore power and you wish to engage the generator, it is not necessary to unplug the shore power cord prior to starting the generator. The generator will take priority over shore power. Shore power takes priority over battery power. If the generator is turned off and the motor home is plugged in to shore power, the available power provided through shore power will then become the primary electrical source. When the motor home is not connected to shore power and the generator is off, the house batteries will become the primary source of electrical power.

Use the generator to charge the house batteries. When the generator is running, excess power not needed to operate RV appliances is directed to the house batteries. In a situation where shore power is low in amperage, perhaps because a campground is running at capacity or due to a black out, the generator can be used as a reliable source of back-up power.

Exercising the generator will help to keep all moving parts lubricated and in working order to insure that the system is ready to operate when needed. For best results, run the generator under an electrical load for 15 minutes.

You can engage the generator while driving down the road. Once the system has reached operating temperature you can turn on a roof air conditioner or some other interior appliance to add a load to the generator. Add loads to the generator one by one to avoid causing the system to disengage. One to two hours per day is optimum time to exercise the generator. Prior to turning off the generator allow the system to cool down by running for five to ten minutes with only a minimal load.

Auto gen start is a feature available on some motor home generators. This feature allows you to program preferred times for the generator to start and stop. Auto gen start does not recognize time zone changes or campground quiet times and may require reprogramming to comply with local ordinances. After the motor home has been in storage with the battery cut off switch turned off, the auto gen start program will generally require resetting. In the event auto gen start has been activated and the house batteries reach a low state of charge, a warning alarm may sound to alert the RV operator of the situation.

Always assure proper exhaust ventilation when operating the generator system. If you plan to run the generator during times you will be asleep, close the windows located near the generator exhaust to block fumes from entering the motor home. Assure that the motor home CO detector is always in working order. Discontinue auto gen start when the motor home is parked in a location that does not provide ample ventilation. Avoid adding extensions to the generator exhaust system and risk heat damage to the fiberglass and paint, cracking of the exhaust pipe, or carbon monoxide poisoning from improper exhaust ventilation.

Regular maintenance of the generator system, including routine oil and filter changes, will help to assure reliable operation of the system when needed. Follow the manufacturer's recommended guidelines for service intervals and preferred parts. Carefully check around the generator for signs of a leak and have all problems promptly repaired. Occasionally clean away dirt and debris from the generator compartment. Never store excess cargo in the generator compartment and risk heat build-up that may damage the system. Provide a clean fuel source to the generator by avoiding the use of stale fuel.

There is no limit to how long the generator will run, as long as the system is supplied the necessary fuel. In most instances, the generator is designed to shut down when the main fuel source reaches ¼ tank, to prevent the motor from running out of fuel. Be aware that running the generator for extended periods of time may accelerate service and maintenance requirements.

In the event that the generator fails to start, insure that the chassis battery is adequately charged, the on/off switch at the generator is on, and the fuse and circuit breaker are in working order. For detailed advice on troubleshooting and repair, consult the generator operations manual or contact the generator manufacturer direct.