

AL COMARGO

Marketing Manager for Onan

» **A**s spring approaches, a lot of you are probably getting your trailers ready for the season. Before you need to run your air conditioner, checking up on your generator might be a good idea. Many LQ manufacturers in our industry use Onan (Cummins) generators, and this month we interviewed Al Camargo, a marketing manager for Onan, to give us some tips on selecting and maintaining our generators.

TWISTER TRAILER: Al, thanks for helping us out. Can you tell us how we would first decide how much power we need if we are purchasing a new generator?

AL CAMARGO: In order to assure you have the proper power, you need to decide how many things you want to run at the same time. The biggest draw of power for a generator is the air conditioning. Then you have refrigerators, televisions, lights, hair dryers, microwaves, battery chargers, etc. How many of those things will you want to run at the same time? Our popular generator sizes are 2800 watt, 4000 watt, 5500 watt or 7000 watt generators. Another consideration is the fuel source: gas, diesel or propane.

TWISTER: Why would we select various fuel sources?

AL: It depends. If you have a fuel tank for ATVs or something, then it makes sense to use that same fuel source for your generator because you already have the fuel. Propane generators are more expensive and have slightly less power than gas fueled ones, diesel generators are heavier than gas fueled units.

TWISTER: Is it good to just buy the biggest unit we can?

AL: Well, I find that people generally always can find more things to plug in. But from an efficiency standpoint, if you aren't running the motor at high enough capacity, it may not be the best for the generator engine. Your generator dealer should be able to assess your max usage level for the items you have to run and you can get the correct size.

TWISTER: How much fuel does a generator use approximately?

AL: A 4000 watt generator will use approximately ½ gallon of fuel in an hour with a half load, which is usually running just an air conditioner. At full load, probably ¾ of a gallon of fuel in an hour. Of course, keeping the unit running efficiently will allow you to use less fuel.

TWISTER: So assuming we have a generator already, how do we maintain it and keep it

running as efficient as possible?

AL: Maintenance is very similar to a car engine in a way. We say "no use is abuse." If you aren't going to be using your generator for a month, you need to either drain the fuel or use a fuel stabilizer otherwise the fuel will go stale and gunk up the components, especially the carburetor, which could be about a \$500 repair. We also advise to use the unit at least once per month, for two hours at least half the max load. This allows the unit to get warm enough and run hard enough to blow the moisture out, break up the carbon deposits, keep the seals from seizing up, and make sure everything is flushed through the system. The more you use your generator the healthier it will be and the more efficient it will run.

TWISTER: So what kind of maintenance are we talking about?

AL: Again, very similar to a car engine. Every eight hours of running, you need to check the oil level and add if necessary, after 150 hours or every year you should change/replace the oil. Also clean the air filter every 150 hours or if in dusty conditions, more often to ensure engine performance. You will often notice the engine working harder than normal because the filter is clogged. You also need to change the oil filter and spark plugs. The recommended maintenance schedule is in your manual or online on our website.

TWISTER: What about keeping the unit clean?

AL: It is important to maintain air flow so the unit will not overheat. Keeping dust and debris away from the unit and the filters is important. Washing the unit in a car wash is usually sufficient, unless you are operating in very dusty conditions, and then sometimes a closer wash will be needed to maintain the air flow. You also should check for hot air circulation, that the engine is not sucking hot/used air back into the fresh air intake.

Also, installation of a generator should take into consideration the air flow, a generator needs plenty of space around it to breathe and work well. And in trailer applications, it is important that it ride in a safe location and be firmly and securely mounted to cut down on road jostling which could knock components loose.

TWISTER: How long should we expect a generator to last?

AL: That depends on the usage and maintenance of the generator. We have had units that surpassed 36,000 hours of usage. Maintenance is really a major factor in keeping your generator working for a long period of time.

TWISTER: Thanks for the help; we will all appreciate it when our air conditioners, fridges and televisions are working well this summer!

MONSOON SILVER

The Storm With Your Silver Lining



"THE STORM IS BREWING"

Hand Cut To Fit Your Needs

Briefcases, Spurs, Belt Plates,
Hand Crafted Buckles, Western Jewelry,
Crowns

Kris Jeter

623-388-0024

PO Box 7970

Surprise, AZ 85374

www.monsoonsilver.com