

## Answers to questions sent to us

Well took a week off, and got a few e-mails asking if I was still writing, and the answer is yes, just a quick vacation.

This week I am going to try and answer some questions that have been forwarded to me since I have been writing these articles. I can't answer them all this week, however, I will try and to answer all of them over a period of time. If you don't see your question answered in the next few weeks, please forward them to me again.

### **1. Are panel plates that are installed in a panel to prevent the main breaker to be turned on when the generator breaker is on a type of transfer switch?**

No, this plate is not a transfer switch, but more of a safety device. If it is installed correctly, it will prevent the generator breaker being turned on unless the main breaker is off, and will prevent the main breaker from being turned on when the generator breaker is on.

According to the NEC (National Electrical Code) definition of a transfer switch:  
*An automatic or nonautomatic device for transferring one or more load conductor connections from one power source to another.*

This plate does not transfer power, however, it will prevent two different power sources (CMP and generator) to be turned on simultaneously. It is more of a safety device

Keep in mind, any plate installed needs to be matched to brand and style of panel. A generic type of plate should never be used.

### **2. I have not lost my power for over a year, do I still need to do a yearly service?**

Good question. If you haven't lost you power for a year, the unit has probably run only about 13 to 17 hours with the weekly exercise cycle. Depending on the manufacturer, they recommend oil changes from 40 to 200 hours, or once a year.

A few years back, vehicles didn't last as long as they do now. Vehicles reaching 100,000 miles were considered high mileage, now it is not uncommon to see vehicles reaching 200,000 miles or more. Of course, no one can deny that they may be better made today, but we are now seeing more and more people changing their oil and filter every 3000 miles.

Your generator has a motor similar to your car, and needs to be maintained the same way. The more often you change your oil and filter, the better chances of the motor lasting longer.

Another point to keep in mind is that there is more done at the oil change than changing the oil and filter. Plugs are changed, air filters are changed, valves should be checked and adjusted as needed, battery is checked, checking for loose connections, looking for oil leaks, frequency is checked, voltages are checked, and other preventive checks.

All these steps help to ensure your generator will work when you most need it. You have a motor, and motors can break down, any preventive measures you take, will raise the odds in your favor that your generator will be working for you when you need it.

To answer your question, yes, a minimum of a yearly maintenance should be done once a year. There is more done than just doing an oil change.

I will discuss more about maintenance next week.

If you have any questions, please forward them to [dirtygenerators@yahoo.com](mailto:dirtygenerators@yahoo.com), and we will try and answer them. We will also answer some of the questions in future articles. Is there a specific topic you would like us to cover? E-mail us and we will try and cover it.