

## **I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING; I'LL DO MY OWN MAINTENANCE (PART II)?**

It's the time of year for maintenance; this is the time of the year you want to try and tip the odds in your favor with your generator. Some people will do a thorough maintenance, others will do a minimal.

I have to say that we are fortunate that most of our customers have us do a thorough maintenance every fall, and an oil change and oil filter change in the spring. As a result, we have very few unexpected breakdowns.

Some people will even do their own service for the winter. After all, how hard can it be change the oil and filter, plugs, and even the air filter? Heck, some will even adjust their own valves.

I chuckle when I hear people say they do their own service. I chuckle, because they do a good job, and they have no problems for a year, maybe two, or even longer. However, at some point, they end up with a serious problem, and usually it is because the maintenance was not done entirely correct. Here is an example.

A couple of years ago, I had a new customer call me and ask me what the clearance was for the valve adjustment, and I told him it should be .005. I asked him if he knew how to do it, and he said yes, he did it the previous year when he did the oil change etc. He said he had set it for .005 because that is what it said in the manual, but wanted to check to make sure. He assured me that he had worked on small engines for many years.

So Mr. K calls me this past year, and said his generator was not starting, sounded awful, and wanted us to check it out. I asked him why he didn't have his installer do it, and he said that the installer told him it wasn't under warranty. Fortunately, when I called the serial number in, it was still under warranty.

We go out, and found it turning over, and over, and over. After going thru it, we found the valves were too tight, one rocker with a crack, one broken rocker, a dent in the valve cover, and two bent rods. We also found an oil filter from the auto part store, as well as the air filter. It was a close look alike. The oil looked like mayonnaise. Obviously, this was not going to be covered under warranty, and I explained to Mr. K. why.

Mr. K. had us do the repair, which was almost \$800. What Mr. K didn't know when he did the valve adjustments, the engine has to be cold and not hot. He said he always ran the engine first to warm the oil so that it would drain better, and while the oil was draining, he would adjust the valves.

Mr. K now has us do a full maintenance in the fall, and an oil and oil filter in the spring. He has probably shortened the life of his generator, but hopefully with the right maintenance, we can extend it a bit longer.

Yes you can do you own maintenance, but unless you have had the training and experience, you are tipping the odds against yourself. Doing the maintenance on a generator is not the same as what you would do on your car.

Don't end up like Mr. K. have your maintenance done by a competent professional. Tip the odds in your favor this winter.

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