IS LOAD SHEDDING AND POWER MANAGEMENT THE SAME?

I met with a customer who asked me if I could do something different with her system so that she would have better control over her high usage appliances. She explained to me that when she had her generator installed, they recommended that she install a load management system.

She said that it was an inconvenience the way it was set up, but thought it was the only way it could be done. After talking to a neighbor who was a customer of ours, she realized there was a better way. She wanted us to fix hers to work the same way.

After looking over her installation, we had to regretfully explain to her that there were no other options. The installation she had installed was a load shedding installation, where as my customer had a power management installation.

What are the differences? Let's first say, both systems are designed to protect the generator from overloading. That is where the similarity ends.

Power management is a proactive system, and load shedding is a reactive. Let me explain.

A power management system monitors the power usage, and if there is power available, it will allow additional appliances to be used. The first step in this type of system is to set the transfer switch to the size of the generator, this way, the transfer switch knows what the maximum load can be. The next step is to install modules in line with the appliances. Central air conditioners are controlled by the transfer switch, so modules do not need to be installed on these units. In all, eight modules can be used to control eight appliances. In addition, if there were appliances that you did not want to come at all during a power outage, you could install additional modules for these. You can install an unlimited of these.

The next step is to set the priorities on these modules, one thru eight, the choice is yours, and can be changed at any time. Example, if you had a module on your dryer and stove, and set the stove as priority one and dryer two, the stove would always be available before your dryer. If you were using your dryer because your stove was off, and you decided to use your stove, your dryer would automatically be turned off if there wasn't enough power available, and would let you use your stove, since you set your stove as priority one. If you were using additional modules, up to eight, the transfer switch would shut off the least priority modules as you had set them, leaving all other appliances running. It will switch you back and forth automatically based on power available. This is called power management.

On the other hand, if you had a power shedding system, you would be able to have a maximum of four loads, again, not including central air. Again, you would set your priorities one thru four.

In this case however, if you were using your dryer and you wanted to use your stove, the unit will let you turn on the stove with the dryer running. However, since it would exceed the capacity of the generator, it will shut off all the appliances, and you would lose the use of the four appliances for an extended period of time. This is called load shedding. Once the load exceeds the capacity of the generator, it sheds all loads on the load shedding system.

Power management is proactive, as it prevents the generator from being overloaded by managing your loads. Load shedding is reactive, as it allows the generator to be overloaded, then shuts down all the appliances and prevents any of them coming back on for a period of time.

Before you purchase a generator, let us meet with you and explain the difference, as there are many more differences.

Unfortunately, many installers who install load shedding systems refer to them as power management.

On another note, we will be doing Adult Education Classes on generators this fall at Windham High School. Check out their program times. Seating may be limited.

Please make sure you pick up The Independent at the many drop off points, visit them online at http://independentpub.com, or better yet, sign up to get their paper delivered to your e-mail automatically every week so you never miss a paper. Help a generator friend; invite them to pick up an independent.

If you have any questions, please forward them to dirfygenerators@yahoo.com, and we will try to answer them. Is there a specific topic you would like us to cover? E-mail us and we will try and cover it