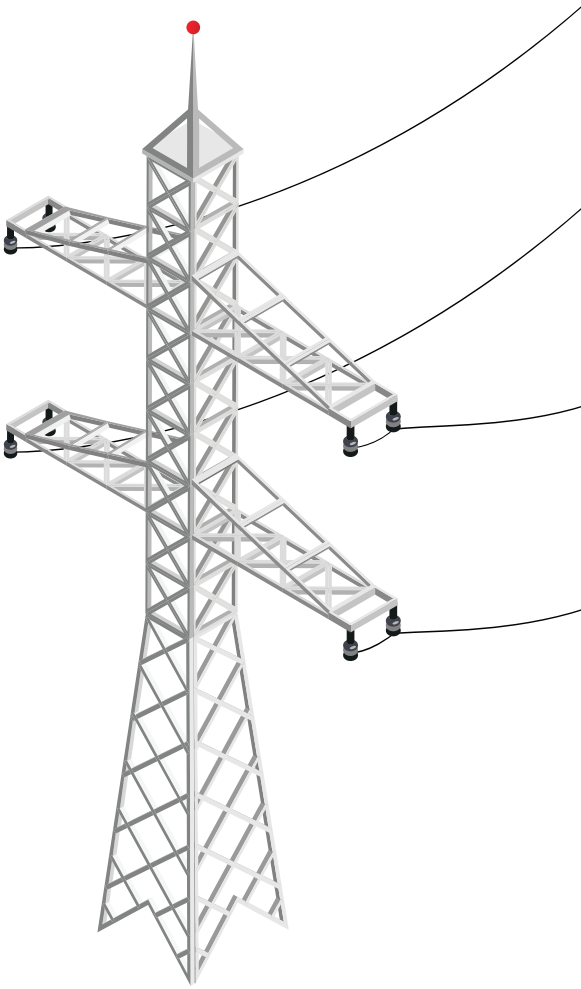
WHY A

GENERATOR

MAY SAVE YOUR BUSINESS

Why a Generator May Save Your Business

California is changing fast when it comes to the utility companies.



Obviously, fire risks are increasing. We all know someone who has lost their house, or their business, or both to a wildfire. Utilities have already announced that PSPS, or Public Safety Power Shut Offs, will become more frequent as the lawsuits against utility companies racking up fast. The enormous liability that dangerous weather conditions present to energy equipment are simply too much to bear and the utilities aren't taking any chances. As a result of these PSPS, outages will also take longer to resolve. Electricity to our communities may take not just days to come back on, but in some cases weeks as the company checks every transformer, and every line for possible damage. In the Inland Empire this winter, a PSPS resulted in three weeks without power for some businesses and homeowners. Again, it's not just a safety issue now, but a legal one. Utilities can no longer afford to keep the lights on if there's a possibility that their power grid might contribute to a catastrophe.

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As if that's not enough, California's increasing reliance on "net zero" energy sources like wind and solar are coming with consequences. Consider Spain and Portugal, countries that announced proudly on April 16th 2025 that 70% of their energy was coming from renewables. On April 28th, 2025 they endured the largest power outages in their history. Looking at the implications of these events on our own country's growing commitment to solar and wind power, Casey Crownheart of the MIT Technology Review summarizes: "as the grid evolves, our methods to keep it reliable and stable will need to evolve too."

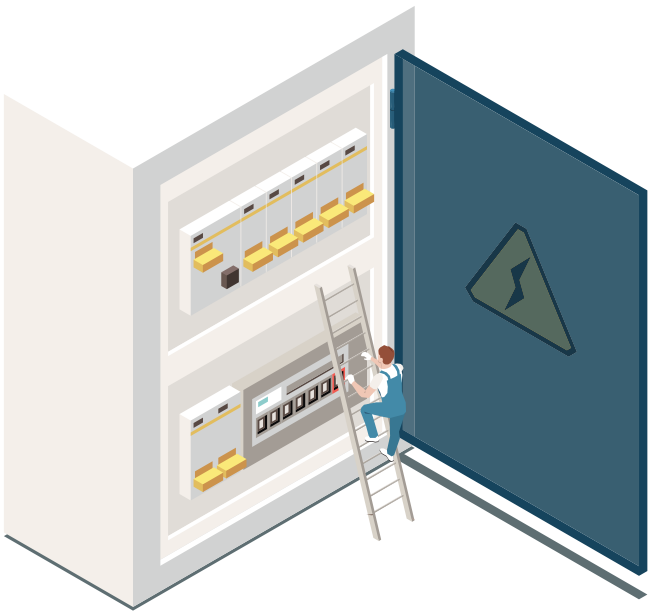
Finally, higher temps during California summers mean more strain on our already fragile electrical grid. Outages are more and more the best solution for Southern California utility companies to reduce demand and stabilize the system.

These new realities are already translating into more frequent power outages. If that means inventory stored in your commercial freezers all go bad, or your employees have to endure sweltering temperatures inside the office for days on end, so be it … unless you have a commercial generator.

Commercial Generators: Real Time Solutions for Energy Uncertainty

If you're a commercial property owner, it's time to ask yourself some serious questions. Can the people or businesses in your building accommodate hours or even days without power? Chances are, even if you're not stocking perishables in industrial freezers, your commercial property depends on consistent indoor temperatures and good air quality to maintain your customer base, the integrity of your products and the tools you use to provide your services. Whether your commercial building houses server rooms or dairy products, apartments or offices, reliable energy is likely essential to all of it.

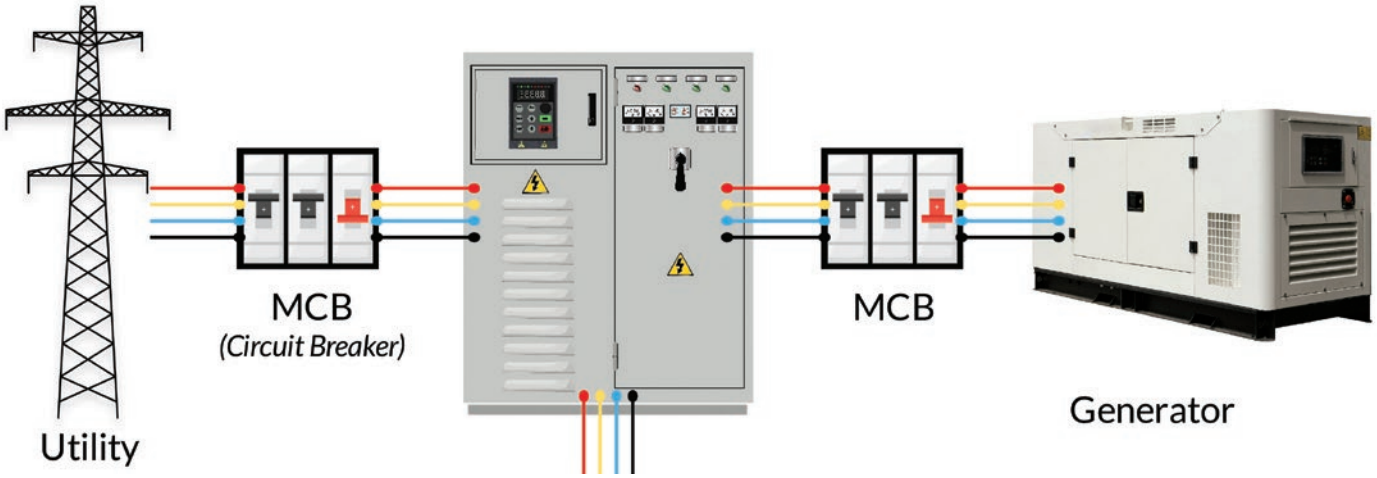
For this kind of reliable backup power, 24/7, 365 days a year, a commercial generator can be the right answer. First created in the 19th century, “the dynamo” generator used in 1844 for commercial electroplating is still in use today. But in California, your commercial generator isn’t just a piece of history, but something to provide your employees, your tenants and you with reliable standby power when needed. Unlike residential models, commercial generators are far larger and more sturdy, able to provide consistent power over a longer time for both industrial applications and indoor comfort within a large, multi-story building.



Know the Basics About a Commercial Generator

Most commercial generators consist of three main elements: an engine, an alternator and a voltage regulator. Many standby generators also work with an automatic transfer switch. This means that when your system detects a failure in the power grid, the ATS transfers your building’s electrical load to your generator. Running time will depend on your fuel source and the size of the generator’s fuel tank. A standby generator can run for even weeks at a time, depending on its configuration.

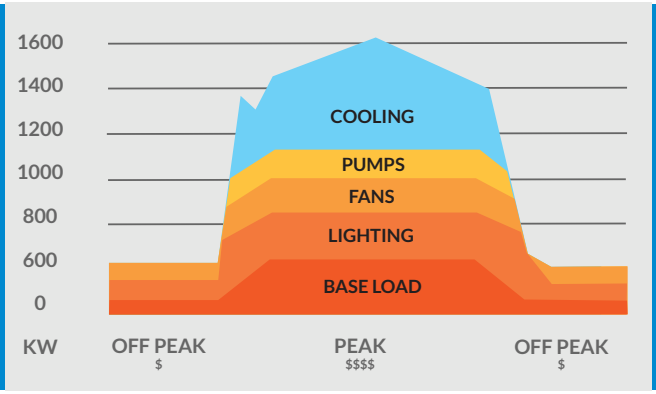
Automatic Transfer Switch



Most commercial generators are designed with a consolidated control panel to communicate with the user. Using this feature, you'll be able to supervise efficient operation, as well as to monitor voltage and electrical current, regulate engine speed, check water temperature and oil pressure. Control panels can also be synchronized with load sharing to accommodate the operation of multiple commercial generators at once.

What Model Do You Need, and What Size?

There are multiple factors to consider when selecting a commercial generator. Along with assessing the cost of purchase and installation, know that different models will have different fuel and maintenance requirements too. You'll have to know exactly what you'll need it for, where you intend to put it, and most importantly, the particular wattage you'll be requiring from this equipment. Peak load in your commercial building will be a phrase you'll want to understand thoroughly. What kind of power will you need on a typical day? Will your generator have to fuel multiple air conditioners, or a large server area, handle refrigeration needs for an entire warehouse or just keep your office comfortable and the drinks in the mini fridge cold? Identify these specifics now to avoid frustrating hassles later.



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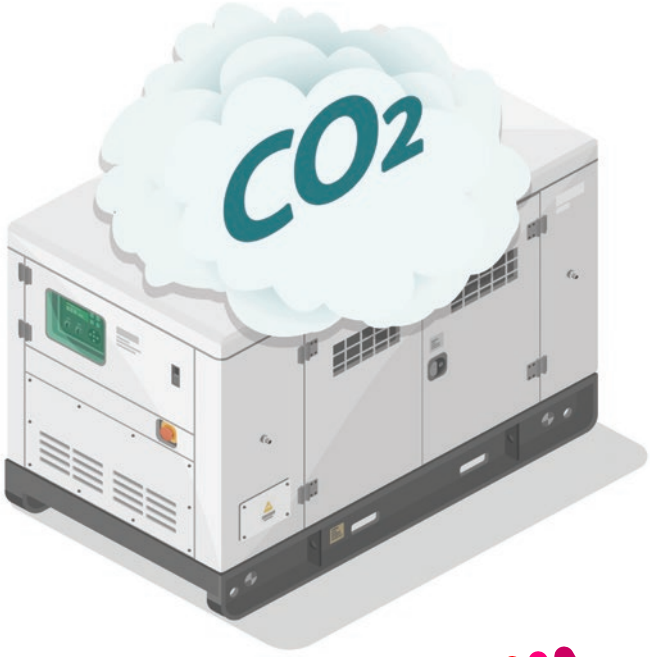
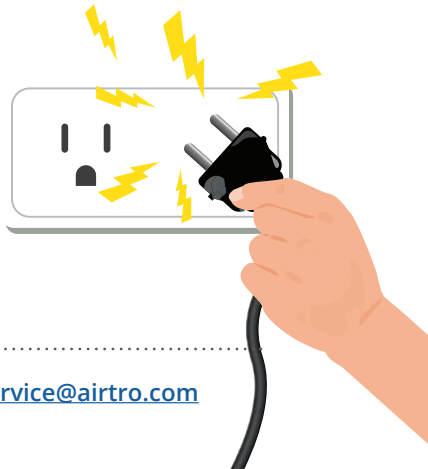
One caveat: we've discussed in our blogs the problems that come with sizing a residential HVAC system incorrectly. In that situation, an oversized air conditioner does not, in fact, cool your home faster, but instead wastes energy, functions less efficiently and is likely to break down more quickly than an appropriately sized system. When it comes to sizing, a commercial generator is no different. While it may be tempting to purchase something bigger than what you need, or seem more cost effective to buy a smaller model than was recommended, don't make this mistake. A generator wrongly sized for your commercial property can present the same kind of headaches that a mismatched HVAC system can.

The Right Placement and a Qualified Installation



Remember, the generator will produce combustion gases. Your commercial generator will have to be vented appropriately to remove this exhaust. Don't take a chance with a cheap installation or slipshod service: think about the right place to put it and how best to ensure proper ventilation at all times.

Remember, any commercial generator also makes a significant amount of noise (65 dB), especially when it's running continuously during an outage. This is especially true for those that run on diesel power. You'll want to put the generator itself outside, within an enclosure designed for this purpose. When the generator is not needed, it typically should run an hour or two a month for maintenance purposes.



Electric shock is another risk that you don't have to take. Once you've purchased a quality commercial generator, don't undermine the integrity of your purchase by cutting corners on substandard installation or less than qualified, regular service. This is a significant investment in your commercial property, and should be regarded as an ongoing asset to be maintained and preserved.

Have a Plan for Responsible Operation

As with any mechanical system, your generator will need regular upkeep to maintain energy efficiency, high performance and overall safety. Regular fluid checks and inspections should be scheduled, while deep cleaning, filter changes and load bank tests are recommended at least twice a year. After all, you wouldn't purchase a new car without planning for regular oil changes or tune ups. This equipment is no different.

Rebates and Savings for Commercial Standby Generators

While there is no specific exemption for its purchase, talk to your tax professionals about how you may be able to use specific business deductions and exemptions to buy and maintain your commercial generator. State, local and even utility company incentives may also exist, depending how often and in what ways you use your equipment.

Make no mistake, power outages are coming. A commercial generator ensures that your commercial property, your tenants and your products will not be affected by short or even longer term blackouts. You can have the peace of mind that comes with knowing critical data is safe, company property is being stored appropriately, and business can continue whatever the vagaries of utility company decisions, energy mandates or the weather report.

All of us at Air-Tro are committed to our commercial clients. We specialize in providing cost and energy effective heating, cooling and refrigeration to fit your needs. Don't hesitate to get

in touch with one of our experts to discuss how a generator could work for you and your commercial property. We're dedicated to providing you with superior service, real product expertise and advice you can count on, no matter which way the wind blows, weather-wise or for our California lawmakers.

Call us at 626 -357-3535, today.

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Robert Helbing, PE, is President of Air-Tro Heating and Air Conditioning Company. He is a Caltech-degreed aeronautical engineer (yes – a rocket scientist!), as well as a 4th generation contractor and 3rd generation engineer. He is a past-president of the Institute of Heating and Air Conditioning Industries (IHACI); Air Conditioning Contractors of America (ACCA) Contractor of the Year, 2011; and a 15-year member of Excellence Alliance Industries, a membership organization committed to the development and improvement of HVACR companies nationwide. Bob is also a founding member and past committee chair for the Western HVAC Performance Alliance, a council of stakeholders in the Energy industry which includes utilities, regulators, manufacturers and contractors. He currently serves on two committees for the WHPA: Commercial Quality Installation and the Existing Buildings Energy Efficiency. He can be reached at 626.357.3535 and bobhelbing@airtro.com.

For more information, visit our commercial section on the web at **airtro.com/commercial**

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