

How Much Power Do You Need?

Size right and save! Obviously, a generator that's undersized for the work it's required to do will wear out too fast and also risk damage to your circuitry. But oversizing your system can also lead to costly wet stacking and carbon in diesel engines.

To estimate the right size for your standby power system, you can start by simply listing the wattages and peak loads of the devices you want to run. The label on most electrical devices will tell you their required wattage, but some allowance is needed for the extra starting surge from most motor-driven devices. Refrigerators, well pumps and power tools can draw as much as six times their running watts!

But.

Also remember that you will rarely run all your utilities, appliances and tools at the same time when the power lines are down. In fact, you may decide that you don't need some appliances or circuits to receive power at all!

Avoid overbuying!

This chart shows you a few examples of power ratings to get you started. To see your actual rates of electrical consumption throughout the year, check your monthly utility bill.

Device*	Running watts	Starting watts
Television - Color	300	300
Lighting circuit (6 x 60w bulbs)	360	360
Desktop computer	600	600
Drill 1/2" Electric	1000	1250
Microwave Oven	625	1425
Furnace Fan - 1/3 HP	700	2100
Refrigerator or Freezer	700	2900
Water well pump (1/2 hp)	1000	3000
Water heater (storage type)	5000	5000
Table Saw 10 inches	1800	6300
Central AC (24,000 BTU/2 HP)	3300	11200

**Different makes and models vary widely in electrical needs.*