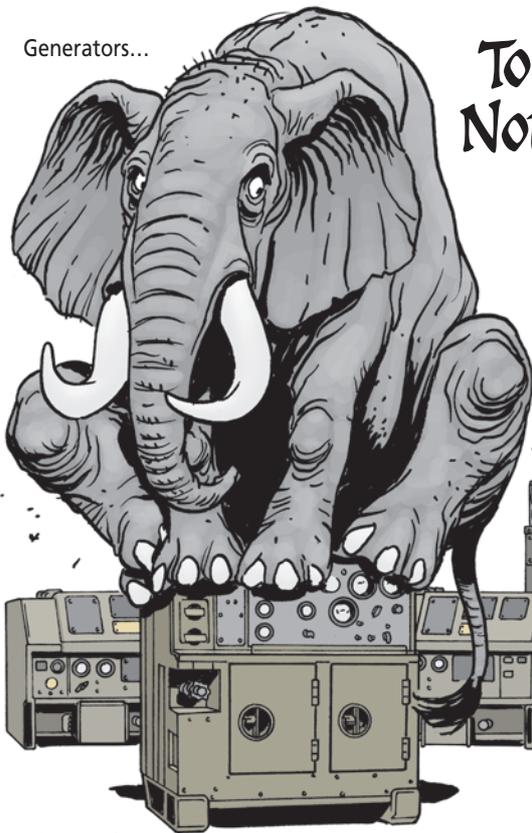


Generators...



To Load Test or Not to Load Test, That is the Question!

WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU DOING WITH THE ELEPHANT?

I'M LOAD TESTING THAT GENERATOR!



Dear Half-Mast,
Do you have to load test generators? I've always done it, but my new boss says, "if it's not in writin', I don't want to do it." Is it in writing? Do we have to do it?

SFC B.J.I.



Dear Sergeant B.J.I.,

Since I answered my first question as a Private under Patton, there's been one question I hate to see come across my desk and this is it. Is load testing generators mandatory or just a good idea? And the answer is, it depends upon what you read and who you talk to.

If you look at private industry and the Air Force and Marine Corps, they load test a generator after every repair, before every deployment or field exercise, and on a periodic basis that depends on the application and installation.

If you look within the Army maintenance community at the backbone of the maintenance system, the LAR, you'll find almost unanimous agreement that load testing is an absolute must.

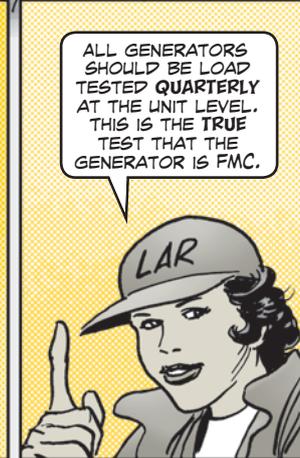


HERE'S WHAT SOME OF THESE EXPERTS SAY...

A FAILED GENERATOR IS **NOT** REPAIRED UNTIL IT HAS PASSED A LOAD TEST.



I THINK THAT IT IS **IMPOSSIBLE** TO VERIFY THE PROPER OPERATION OF A GENERATOR WITHOUT A LOAD TEST.



ALL GENERATORS SHOULD BE LOAD TESTED **QUARTERLY** AT THE UNIT LEVEL. THIS IS THE **TRUE** TEST THAT THE GENERATOR IS FMC.



YOU WILL FIND REFERENCE TO LOAD TESTING THE GENERATOR ESPECIALLY DURING OR AFTER ANY SIGNIFICANT REPAIR IN VARIOUS TMS AND MAINTENANCE MANUALS.

And, now, here's the gospel according to Half-Mast: It is a sound and cost effective policy for generator set management and maintenance to load test. Generators leaving the shop should be operated on a load to verify full output. Just starting the generator and monitoring voltage/frequency doesn't identify all engine problems. I recommend a semi-annual or quarterly load testing interval if the set isn't in the shop for maintenance before those times.

Of course, the next question is, are you authorized a load bank? Well, it depends on what your definition of authorized is. Talk to your generator LAR.

Half-Mast