



Job Title: Generator Operator
Department: Lighting Department

Overview of role

Reporting to the Gaffer, but taking instruction from the Best Boy or Chargehand, the Generator Operator in high-end TV and scripted film is responsible for installing, testing and monitoring power distribution for lighting and other power on set. This may be from a fixed power source such as a studio, but on location, a portable generator is usually preferred. Diesel generators are still commonplace, but battery, solar, hydrogen fuel cells and even wind are increasingly being used. The Generator Operator is also likely to be working as a Lighting Technician on a production. This aspect of their role is described in the Lighting Technician Skills Checklist.

Core responsibilities:

These core responsibilities are provided as a guide and are not exhaustive. The exact responsibilities on a particular production will vary depending on the scale and budget band.

1. Select generators or power sources

- Select power sources that are sustainable and operationally suitable in consultation with the Gaffer and Best Boy
- Identify when back up or load share systems are required
- Discuss with suppliers the availability of spares and the extent of service, repair or modification they will allow
- Make sure all equipment for power distribution is available and suitable for the production
- Suggest solutions to the Gaffer and Best Boy for any omissions, or inaccuracies in equipment
- Strike up relationships and save out of hours emergency contacts for suppliers' transport and workshop managers

2. Position generators

- Position generators as per parking plan or other instructions
- Check position allows for refuelling
- Resolve any generator positioning issues with the Locations Department
- Use levelling blocks to level generator when required
- Earth the generator

3. Install and test power distribution cabling

- Obtain the distribution circuit size or estimates of expected load required at each position
- Identify and assess planned cable routes and placement of distribution boxes and other equipment as per the design
- Liaise with Locations Department when cable routes cross public spaces
- Use barriers, cones and signage where required
- Label Boxes and circuits to avoid overloading and to facilitate fault-finding
- Install additional or secondary earthing when required
- Inspect, test and certificate temporary systems to BS7909, sharing certification with the Best Boy for distribution
- Retest when any major changes occur

4. Operate generators

- Perform prestart checks
- Start the generator
- Check that generator controls and systems are functioning correctly
- Confirm and adjust the supply frequency and voltage
- Monitor generator functioning, fuel, and fluid levels throughout use
- Monitor generator balance and loading throughout use
- Shut down generators safely
- Use emergency shutdown procedures and isolation when required and do not re-energise generator until issue is cleared
- Record generator running times, service requirements and vehicle mileage

5. Maintain generators

- Discuss fuel purchase and delivery options with the Best Boy
- Monitor fuel usage to preplan refuelling and keep the Best Boy informed
- Liaise with Best Boy and supplier in advance of service hours expiring to arrange service or replacement
- Carry out routine servicing and maintenance of generators, such as fluid top ups and fuel filter cleaning, when allowed in supplier agreement
- Identify if the cause of faults are fuel-related, electrical, mechanical, electronic or external to the generator
- Rectify faults if it is safe to do so using appropriate tools, equipment, materials and procedures
- Communicate expected timeframe for repairs to be complete

6. Ensure health and safety related to generators

- Assess the need for fire suppression
- Make sure a spill kit is available
- Carry out a visual risk assessment of site conditions to identify any hazards not detailed in risk assessment method statements
- Take appropriate action to reduce the risks of any hazards identified
- Ensure compliance with environmental requirements such as emissions and storage and disposal of contaminants and pollutants
- Refer any issues to the Best Boy

Role specific skills:

- Preparing and siting generators
- Monitoring the operation and safety of generators
- Maintaining generators and rectifying faults
- Installing, testing and managing power distribution cabling

Other / Transferable Skills:

- Communication. Liaising with own department about lighting work and following radio etiquette when using the radio
- Organisation. Following call sheets and movement orders, keeping timesheets and preparing and submitting invoices
- Problem-solving. Methodically identifying the causes of faults in equipment
- Securing work. Collating proof of competency and experience, establishing and negotiating rate, and clarifying and approving deal memo and contract
- Driving. Driving production-controlled vehicles and operating licenced machines, keeping logs of operation and reporting defects and accidents. For relevant road going vehicles using tachographs correctly and downloading data

Attributes

- Resilience, Enthusiasm and Curiosity - Adapts positively to changing work priorities and patterns, ensuring deadlines continue to be met. Is proactive and explores new ideas and non-standard ways of working which will enhance and deliver the best results for the production
- Productivity - Organises work effectively and achieves required results within deadlines. Demonstrates the drive and energy to get things done in pressurised situations and escalates appropriately when necessary.
- Ethics and Integrity - Honest and principled in all their actions and interactions. They will be respectful and inclusive of others, and meet the ethical requirements of their profession.
- Flexibility - Willing to both listen and respond to changing priorities and working requirements as required, while at all times maintaining high standards in a constantly changing production environment.