



Residential Grinder Pump Station Program Generator Use FAQs

What happens if there is a power outage?

During a power outage the station will not operate to empty the basin, so homeowners should minimize water use until power is restored. During extended power outages, Martin County Utilities (MCU) crews will work to assist with temporary pump outs until power is restored, but homeowners may elect to use generator power at their own station.

How much water does the typical appliance use?

The basin has a reserve capacity of a little over 80 gallons, which using the chart below will give you an idea how long before you would need to run the generator. With power outages, you will not have a water heater running, so only quick cold showers, and you lose the largest water using appliances – the clothes washer and the dishwasher.

Below is a data table for household regulatory flows for standard fixtures.

TYPE OF USE	1994 US ENERGY POLICY ACT MAXIMUM FLOWS	WATERSENSE / ENERGY STAR SPECIFICATIONS
Toilet	1.6 gallons per flush	1.28 gallons per flush
Shower	2.5 gallons per minute	2.0 gallons per minute
Kitchen Faucet	2.5 gallons per minute	1.5 gallons per minute
Lavatory Faucet	1.5 gallons per minute	

For example, using the data in the middle column, a day without power might look like:

24 gallons = 15 toilet flushes * 1.6 gallons per flush
 25 gallons = two x 5-minute cold showers x 2.5 gallons per minute
 25 gallons = 10 minutes kitchen sink running continuously x 2.5 gallons per minute
 74 gallons wastewater per day

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I don't have a generator and power is out, what now?

During extended power outages, MCU crews will work to assist with temporary pump outs until power is restored. Homeowners should minimize water use during this time.

Does the grinder station need continuous generator power?

No, but depending on water use, the generator should be periodically connected so no wastewater spills or backups occur. The process of pumping down the grinder station should take 5-15 minutes depending on the basin level. The generator can then be used to power other devices.

Can I use a portable generator to power the grinder station?

Yes, the wall mounted grinder station control panel includes an external twist lock receptacle and a built-in automatic transfer switch that will switch to generator power even if there is power at the home or if power is restored during use. Homeowners do not need to turn off any home electric panel breakers during use or open the grinder station control panel or underground basin.

The best time to test the use of a portable generator is prior to needing it due to a power outage. MCU staff is happy to meet with homeowners to demonstrate how to use the homeowner's portable generator to power the grinder station.

What size portable generator will I need?

The generator must have a round, 30 Amp / 240 Volt AC 4-wire receptacle, a minimum running rating of 5,000 watts and a peak rating of 6,500 watts. The receptacle on the generator should be embossed with "**NEMA L14-30R.**" See the images below for a typical generator panel, which has conventional 120-volt outlets in addition to the required 240-volt outlet. Note that small 120VAC inverter generators will not work.

Generator Socket
(L14-30R)



Generator Cord
Ends



Control Panel



Generator Cord
Connected



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What type of generator cord will I need?

You will need a 10 gauge 4-wire cord with appropriate ends. The male plug connects to the generator and the female connects to the grinder control panel. The connectors on each end should be imprinted with “**NEMA L14-30**” with one male and one female end. The length should allow for the generator to connect to the grinder station control panel and MCU recommends a cord that is at least 10 feet long, but no more than 50 feet.

How do I run the grinder station with the portable generator?

WARNING : Portable generators can generate deadly exhaust fumes and must only be used outdoors and placed away from windows, doors and vents. The operator of a generator is responsible for proper and safe use of the generator. The instructions below are specific to running the grinder station and assume the operator has read their owner’s manual and thoroughly understands all instructions before using the equipment.

- Inspect the cord before use and do not attempt to connect if it is damaged.
- Unplug all cords attached to the generator.
- Never start or stop the generator with connected electrical loads.
- Start the generator and allow to warm up per the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Connect the cord to the grinder control panel receptacle, twisting clockwise to lock in place.
- Connect the other end to the generator receptacle.
- There will be approximately a 30-second delay from the generator connection until the controller responds.
- If the tank needs pumping, the red grinder control panel light will illuminate and the alarm will sound. Press the silence button on the bottom left side of the grinder control panel. The red light may remain on for up to 15 minutes depending on the basin level.
- Once the red light turns off, the pump will continue to operate for a brief period.
- Two minutes after the light turns off, unplug the cord from the generator, turning counterclockwise. Reconnect any other previously connected devices to the other outlets.

What do I need to do if I have a whole house generator or a partial house generator with load shedding?

Your electrician is responsible for ensuring that the grinder station load will work for your specific situation. They will need to know that the grinder system has a peak startup load of 6,500 watts for ¼ second at 240 volts, and then drops to between 500 and 1,200 watts while the pump is running. The control panel uses approximately 50 watts when in standby mode monitoring the station.