

# NFPA 110 Pertaining to Generator Set Systems Level 1 and 2

Information Sheet # 25

## 1.0 Introduction

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) maintains several standards covering standby generators and automatic transfer switches (ATS). The NFPA standard for generator set systems most frequently encountered by the designer is NFPA 110 – Standard for Emergency Power Supply Systems (EPSS). By definition, this consists of an engine-driven generator set connected to a system of conductors, disconnecting and over-current protection devices, transfer switches, supervisory and support devices (including fuel storage); up to and including the load terminals of the transfer equipment.

**“System designers must review the complete NFPA 110 document to determine exact NFPA 110 requirements.”**

**This info sheet outlines the differences between NFPA levels 1 and 2 and the topics it addresses. (see Table Below)**

## 2.0 NFPA 110 Categories

The NFPA standard for generator set systems most frequently encountered by the designer is NFPA 110 – **Standard for Emergency Power Supply Systems (EPSS)**. By definition, this consists of an engine-driven generator set connected to a system of conductors, disconnecting and over-current protection devices, transfer switches, supervisory and support devices (including fuel storage); up to and including the load terminals of the transfer equipment. *(Continued over)*

**NFPA 110 Table 5.6.5.5 Safety Indications and Shutdowns for Level 1 and Level 2 (2005 Edition)**

Item	Indicator Function (at Battery Voltage) <i>See notes over</i>	Level 1			Level 2		
		CV	S	RA	CV	S	RA
a	Over crank	X	X	X	X	X	O
b	Low water temperature	X	NA	X	X	NA	O
c	High engine temperature pre-alarm	X	NA	X	O	NA	NA
d	High engine temperature	X	X	X	X	X	O
e	Low lube oil pressure pre-alarm	X	NA	X	O	NA	NA
f	Low lube oil pressure	X	X	X	X	X	O
g	Overspeed	X	X	X	X	X	O
h	Low fuel main tank	X	NA	X	O	NA	O
i	Low coolant level	X	O	X	X	O	X
j	EPS supplying load	X	NA	NA	O	NA	NA
k	Control switch not in automatic position	X	NA	X	O	NA	NA
l	High battery voltage	X	NA	NA	O	NA	NA
m	Low cranking voltage	X	NA	X	O	NA	O
n	Low voltage in battery	X	NA	NA	O	NA	NA
o	Battery charger ac failure	X	NA	NA	O	NA	NA
p	Lamp test	X	NA	NA	X	NA	NA
q	Contacts for local and remote common alarm	X	NA	X	X	NA	X
r	Audible alarm silencing switch	NA	NA	X	NA	NA	O
s	Low starting air pressure	X	NA	NA	O	NA	NA
t	Low starting hydraulic pressure	X	NA	NA	O	NA	NA
u	Air shutdown damper when used	X	X	X	X	X	O
v	Remote emergency stop	NA	X	NA	NA	X	NA

Legend: CV = Control panel-mounted visual. S = Shutdown of EPS indication. RA = Remote audible. X = Required. O = Optional. NA = Not applicable

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The installation information provided in this information sheet is informational in nature only, and should not be considered the advice of a properly licensed and qualified electrician or used in place of a detailed review of the applicable National Electric Codes and local codes. Specific questions about how this information may affect any particular situation should be addressed to a licensed and qualified electrician.

**Notes referring to chart on page one**

<b>1</b>	Item (p) shall be provided, but a separate remote audible signal shall not be required when the regular work site in 5.6.6 is staffed 24 hours a day.
<b>2</b>	Item (b) is not required for combustion turbines.
<b>3</b>	Item (s) or (t) shall apply only where used as a starting method.
<b>4</b>	Item (j): EPS ac ammeter shall be permitted for this function.
<b>5</b>	All required CV functions shall be visually annunciated by a remote, common visual indicator.
<b>6</b>	All required functions indicated in the RA column shall be annunciated by a remote, common audible alarm as required in 5.6.5.5 (4).
<b>7</b>	Item (h) on gaseous systems shall require a low gas pressure alarm.
<b>8</b>	Item (b) shall be set at 11°C (20°F) below the regulated temperature determined by the EPS manufacturer as required in 5.3.1.

*(Continued from page one)*

Local authorities, such as building inspectors or fire marshals, should always be consulted to determine if NFPA 110 compliance is required for a standby generator set application.

**NFPA 110 details three categories in classifying an emergency power supply system:**

The categories defined are Class, Type and Level. All need to be defined in any project specification to ensure that the proper configuration is quoted and supplied.

**Class.** This defines the minimum number of hours the generator set can operate at its rated load without refueling. Most commonly specified are: Class 48 (minimum of 48 hours) and sometimes Class 72 (minimum of 72 hours).

*Note! Level 1 installations in high seismic risk areas (Zones 3 and 4) require a minimum of a 96 hour on-site fuel supply (i.e. Class 96). This fuel supply cannot be shared with any other purpose.*

**Type.** This defines the maximum time, in seconds, from a utility outage until the standby generator is supplying power that the load terminals of the ATS can be without acceptable electrical power. For example Type 10 means that the standby system must provide power within 10 seconds.

**Level.** Level 1 is most stringent and imposed when failure of the standby system could result in loss of human life or serious injury. Level 2 is used when failure is less critical to human life and safety. Level 1 requires that additional generator features be included. (See the chart over for details of Level One and Level Two)

**Site Testing and Maintenance of Generator Sets to NFPA 110:**

**Testing.** NFPA 110 stipulates several different site tests which should be referred to in order to ensure compliance. Tests can be made at unity power factor, if the 0.8 power factor rated load testing of the complete unit was carried out by the manufacturer before shipment from the factory.

NFPA stipulates exhaust-stack temperatures to prevent wet stacking (oil blow-by of piston rings) based on the generator size. These can be given to technicians by the manufacturer of the generator set. If no more than 60% of generator rated output is available in building load, a resistive load bank must be used to test the generator at its full output capacity.

**3.0 Maintenance and Operational Testing/Inspection.**

All EPSS with ancillary equipment, including transfer switches, must be inspected weekly and exercised under load at least monthly, for a minimum of 30 minutes, preferably with load. NFPA 110 also requires circuit breakers be exercised annually with EPS in “off” position. Breakers rated in excess of 600 volts should be exercised every six months and tested every two years under simulated overload conditions. This will require careful planning and diligent coordination. It is vital that all management and staff are aware when scheduled maintenance is arranged to be carried out. A Level 1 EPSS must be tested for at least four hours, at least once every 36 months. ATS’s are subject to an annual maintenance program, including one major maintenance and three quarterly inspections. All data and readings should be recorded in the on-site maintenance log, for future inspection and reference.

**For more information about NFPA 110**

NFPA Headquarters, 1 Batterymarch Park, P.O. Box 9101, Quincy, MA 0269-9101 • NFPA website: [www.nfpa.com](http://www.nfpa.com)

**4.0 Note regarding - Joint Commission of Accreditation for Hospital Organizations (JCAHO)**

We feel it of interest to note that many hospitals are now being accredited by the Joint Commission. This organization addresses emergency management of hospitals (such as occurs with loss of utility power, water, etc). They provide standards covering: provisioning of care, treatment and services, patients rights and responsibilities in hospitals, and this includes a reliable EPSS in most cases. There has to be a written emergency plan in place with clearly defined responsibilities and assignation of adequate staff, including multiple back-up personnel. All such persons must be trained and their attendance should be taken into account by the EPSS supplier when arranging such courses. The EPSS maintenance requirements must conform to NFPA 110 for testing purposes, but in addition, calls for monthly testing of generator and automatic transfer switches.

More details can be found on JCAHO web site: [www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org)



**Oklahoma City Area**  
7300 Melrose Lane  
Oklahoma City  
OK 73127  
405.949.2332  
405.842.4864 fax

**Austin Area**  
4918 Burselson Road  
Austin  
TX 78744  
512.477.6937  
512.477.6938 fax

**Tulsa Mailing Address**  
P.O. Box 581807  
Tulsa  
OK 74158-1807  
918.836.0066  
918.836.0094 fax

**Dallas/Ft. Worth Area**  
101 Industrial Boulevard  
Mansfield  
TX 76063  
918.640.5544  
817.477.2938 fax

**Longview Area**  
1913 East US Hwy 80  
White Oak  
TX 75693  
903.291.8305  
903.291.8327 fax

**San Antonio Area**  
4702 B Dodge Street  
San Antonio  
TX 78217  
201.333.0377  
201.653.7121 fax

**Little Rock Area**  
29 Collins Industrial Place  
Building 1C  
North Little Rock, AR 72113  
501.907.5884  
501.907.4702 fax

