

MAKING AUTOMATED STANDBY POWER “LOW PROFILE”

The burgeoning need for continuous and abundant electric power is a rising concern to everyone.

As the power grid grows increasingly strained, factories, stores, professional offices, schools, medical centers and institutions are progressively more exposed to brownouts and power outages that result in process failures, hazards, work stoppages, data loss or, at the very least, inconvenience.

As a result, the standby UPS (uninterruptible power supply) is viewed as vital protection against power disruptions, not only by business operators, but also among savvy architects, engineers and electrical technicians who design and support facilities.

“I can’t think of a business or activity that wouldn’t benefit from having an emergency power supply,” says Patrick Sullivan, a power systems and controls consultant. “Standby electrical power is now an important safety consideration in almost any structure, whether public or private.”

Sullivan adds that the availability of automatically charged, battery-powered backup systems is a vast improvement over systems of the past, which were often bulky, expensive, were not instantaneous and became undependable over time.

Today, there are a variety of systems that include automatic transfer switches so that the backup system activates instantaneously. The remaining issues are cost, capacity, bulkiness and ease of installation either for new construction or retrofit situations.

When it comes to small businesses, medical offices, schools, residences and light manufacturers, there is a new, highly advanced yet relatively low-cost backup power system that addresses all of those issues.

The Silent Sentry from power systems veteran OnStat Power, Inc. provides up to 3,000-watt capacity and packs up to 4 kilowatt-hours of stored energy. This low-profile electric power backup system is available with self-contained circuit breakers for easier installation.



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4 Kilowatt-hours of stored energy, enough to support medical equipment, light fixtures, public address systems, pumps, gas/oil heating systems and other "mission critical" needs.

At the same time, because this system features a low profile that wall-mounts nearly flush, this system is quite aesthetically appealing to architects and interior designers as well as occupants.

For example, Washington DC-based Washington Wellness Institute (WWI) has very modern and clean-lined office space in which they perform a variety of health, cosmetic and rejuvenation surgical procedures.

Standby power is essential to them because they naturally don't want to interrupt a procedure because of a power outage incident.

"WWI suggested the initial specifications," says Suzanne Zahr-Fleming, AIA, NCARB, Leed AP, owner of ZDS Architects, Seattle, WA. "They were originally looking at a mobile standby power cart for the procedures room. However, because they wanted to keep that space as flexible and free as possible, they began to consider placing the standby power unit in the adjacent mechanical room. Since that room contains a number of permanent utilities, they decided to purchase a Silent Sentry wall-mounted unit from OnStat Power Systems.

"Not only did this system provide the capacity for the load requirement anticipated by WWI, but it is also a compact, wall-mounted unit that was easy to install and was priced within the budget they had established for a backup power system."

Although this product is good looking and provides the power needed, cost is also an important consideration. The Urbana GI Endoscopy Center LLC, Ijamsville, MD, chose the Silent Sentry mainly due to the relatively low cost. "As an Endoscopy Center regulated by Medicare and the State Department of Health," explains Ruth Fisher, Center Administrator. "A generator or battery backup system is required to pass certification standards. The compactness of this unit also made it an ideal choice for us. In addition, OnStat was easy to work with.

"Their sales rep was great at explaining technical stuff to a non-tech person, and configuring the system to meet our needs."

Available in 2,000, 2,500 and 3,000

watt capacity, this system is based on 12-volt battery banks and easily adapts to off-grid power sources. The hardwired version is designed for easy installation with built-in UL-489 Branch-Circuit Protectors for distributed loads, eliminating the need for an emergency-circuit sub panel.

Sullivan points out that ease of

installation is a major appeal of the Silent Sentry system. Installation is facilitated by the system's low-profile design. Its body is only 14 inches wide and mounts on or between wall studs, with mounting flanges that can be relocated to reduce protrusion to just 4-1/2 inches. It connects to power supplies by hard-wiring or a standard extension cord.

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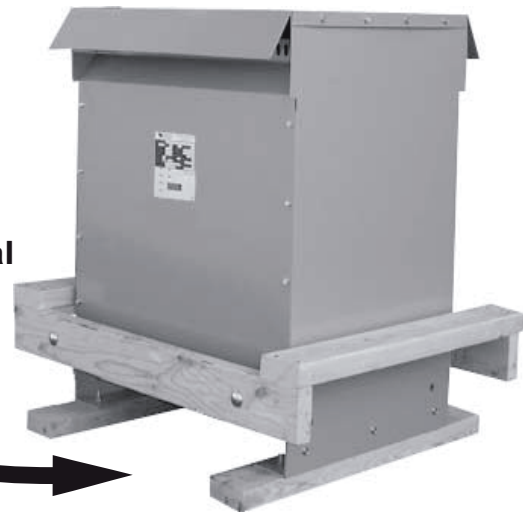
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