

TIME TO EXERCISE

By Kevin Maine

August 19th through the 21st, Steuben County received an inordinate rain fall, because of tropical storm Fred. As streams overflowed their embankments, a state of emergency was declared in the western portion of the county. Several areas had to be evacuated. The Hamlet of Woodhull was decimated. Their DPW garage had several feet of water along with their newly built wastewater treatment plant. . Tragically, there was one loss of life.



High water mark

Whether we are water, wastewater, or both; and seeing events like this, we should be asking ourselves; Are we prepared? How do we prepare for the next event?

Many times, during your routine work, you've had equipment issues. Who has the keys? The generator or pumps won't start. Where is the trash pump, did you bring enough fuel? Does it have enough oil? Now imagine the same scenario during an emergency callout!

These situations can be reduced or avoided if you service your equipment after each use. Service - refuel trash pumps, generators etc., prior to storage. When not used for extended

periods of time, consider exercising those portable pumps and generators. Some trash pumps have oil sensor issues (verify oil levels). When exercising portable generators, put a load on it, run a power tool. If it has output meters, verify voltage, and current output. Is it running at 60 hertz? Does the governor make appropriate changes in RPMs when loaded?

How about your larger equipment? Permanent stand-by generators, large pumps (both electrical and diesel), and tractors used to power PTO driven equipment.

Many of the permanent generator installations are in remote locations and have been programmed to automatically exercise on a regular schedule. Often, we assume the generator exercised without issue. Did you check if the auto exercise ran as scheduled? Were there any alarms? Did you record fluid levels?

Diesel pumps typically are large capacity 500 gpm and larger and are used in worst case situations and often set for extended periods of time between use. This equipment should be exercised periodically as well. Fluids should be checked and replaced as recommend by the manufacturer. Have you checked the batteries? Do you use some type of battery tender?

Hopefully, your system will never experience a catastrophic event like Woodhull's. But please let it be a reminder that we need to continually review our emergency preparedness and be sure our equipment is ready for the job! 💧💧💧



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