Heating Emergency Power System Engines with Heat Pumps

A Study in Energy Efficiency for Emergency Backup Generator Internal Combustion Engine Heating

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Glossary

COP – Coefficient of Performance; the efficacy of a device to move heat from one substance to another, similar to, but not to be confused with, efficiency

EEM – Energy Efficiency Measure; a device or process the reduces the amount of energy from baseline needed to complete a task

EPS – Emergency Power System; emergency backup electrical power provider

HTX- Heat Transfer; the natural process of heat moving from a hot substance to a cooler substance

ICE – Internal Combustion Engine; primary mover for most emergency power systems (emergency generators)

MTBF – Mean Time Between Failures; statistical prediction of the life of a mechanical and electrical component

NFPA – National Fire Protection Agency of the United States of America; national safety oversight and rule generating agency

OAT – Outside Air Temperature (Dry Bulb); measured by a regional weather station, for this effort, data supplied by the Spokane International Airport

OEM – Original Equipment Manufacturer; parts or equipment originally produced for use by the primary manufacturer, example Cummins or Caterpillar

TMY – Typical Meteorological Year; average climate hourly climate (dry bulb temperature, wet bulb temperature, humidity...) for an average year in a region

 \sim – Tilda; typically used to indicate that a reported value is an approximate value

Executive Summary

Heat pumps are everywhere, warming homes, offices, providing domestic hot water and now even providing warmth to emergency generator sets keeping them ready to start at a moment's notice. To measure and evaluate the effects of warming the generator's engine with heat pumps, five commercial facilities with 750kW to 2.5MW generators, in or around Spokane Washington USA, were retrofitted with a commercially available generator block heat pump system. Testing revealed that on average heat pumps reduced block warming energy consumption by 78% (22,463 kWh per year per generator) compared to the existing baseline electric resistance heaters. For the average U.S. commercial customer this is a \$3,217 /year reduction in operating costs. It would curtail 9.8 tonne of greenhouse gases for customers of a utility with 100% natural gas fired generation or 23.5 tonnes for 100% coal fired generation.

Introduction

The United States of America's National Fire Protection Agency's (NFPA) code 110 for Emergency Power Systems (EPS) requires backup power systems to startup, reach operating speed and transfer load within 10 seconds of losing electric utility services. Internal combustion engines (ICE) are the primary EPS movers; to meet the 10 second requirement ICEs are stored at a ready-tooperate temperature - block heaters are responsible for meeting temperature requirements.

The ready-to-operate temperature requirement is a boon to inefficiency due to differences in temperature between the ICE (warm), the ambient air (not so warm), and subsequent heat transfer (HTX). All energy added to the ICE by the block heater will eventually be lost to the environment.

Block heaters convert electrical energy directly into heat via resistive elements. The element is in contact with the ICE's coolant evenly distributing heat throughout the ICE. Unfortunately, from an energy efficiency standpoint, the warmed ICE then transfers heat to the environment primarily via convection and radiation.



Figure 1: Example test bed enclosed, unheated, 1MW EPS.

Heat pumps do not convert electricity directly to heat. Instead, they use a refrigeration cycle to draw heat from the surrounding ambient air and transfer it, i.e. pump it, to the ICE. Electric resistance heaters are ~100% efficient while a typical air-source heat pump does the same task using ~30% of the heater's energy. A boon for energy efficiency.

This paper describes heat pump ICE heating technology, it's effect on energy consumption, and EPS operations as tested in real world applications.

Internal Combustion Engine Heating Concepts

Electric Resistance Heaters

ICE heaters are electric resistance thermostatically controlled, coolant warming secondary devices mounted externally to the ICE. Coolant flows through hoses which interconnect the heater and ICE. The heater is controlled via a thermostat; it energizes the heater as the ICE rejects heat to the environment and the ICE temperature drops below a specified setpoint.

Heaters typically range in size from 1-9kW with larger applications employing multiple heaters. Heater sizing is directly related to the ICE block's size and the installed environment (indoor, outdoor, temperature controlled). ICE block heat loss is proportional to the exposed surface area (block size) and the temperature difference between the block surface and ambient air.



Figure 2: Examples of an ICE heater in an outdoor application.

Pumping Heat

Like a domestic heat pump water heater, an ICE heat pump uses electricity to operate the compressor to drive a refrigeration cycle moving heat from ambient air to ICE coolant. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)¹ provides an excellent description of air-source heatpump operation.

The heat pump manufacturer recommends the heat pump be installed as depicted in Figure 3. The OEM provided heater is retained as an auxiliary heater circulating coolant between the heat pump's condenser and the ICE. The OEM heater, either thermosiphon or pump-driven, serves as a pass-through while the heat pump is is operating.



Figure 3: Generalized operational heating system diagram with heat pump, auxiliary (baseline) heater and heat pump controlled coolant circulation pump.

Heating Redundancy

An added benefit of implementing the heat pump system employed during this testing is system redundancy. It is common knowledge that heat pump capacity and efficacy is tied to the ambient air temperature. The system maintains the existing block heater in an auxiliary role, energized when ambient temperatures drop. In most conditions, this configuration adds a level of redundancy to the existing heater, essentially providing an N+1 operational backup as depicted in Figure 3.

¹ <u>https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/air-source-heat-pumps</u>

At the time of this technology evaluation there appears to be one commercially available ICE heating heat pumping system produced by Hotstart (<u>https://www.hotstart.com/</u>). For testing, HE series devices (see Figure 4) were deployed to selected Avista Utility customer sites and evaluated in real world conditions.



Figure 4: Promotional image of Hotstart's HE ICE heating system. Image care of: https://www.hotstart.com/solutions/energy-efficientheaters/

Test Procedures and Results

Field Testing

Five Avista Utilities customer sites participated in this effort to compare existing ICE heating technology to heat pump technology. The sites included health care, public safety corrections facility, a university, and data centers. All sites employed 750kW or larger rated EPS and all units were enclosed within facility buildings. The enclosures are a mixture of heated, heated +cooled, and un-conditioned spaces.

The testing involved baseline and reporting periods where heater current draw was measured and logged in variety OAT. Period lengths were selected to record heating energy in wide range of OATs; the periods did not span an entire year but data sets were expansive enough to allow for interpolation and extrapolation of energy use across a Typical Meteorological Year (TMY).

An ONSET HOBO H22 energy data logger with an appropriately sized split-core current transducers (CT) sampled and logged current draw. Enclosure temperature was logged using an ONSET S-TMB-M002 temperature sensor (see Figure 5). Onsite characteristic voltage and power factor measurement conducted using a Fluke 41B power harmonics analyzer (see Figure 6).



Figure 5: Onset H22 data logger, Onset TRMS module, a 15 amp current transducer (CT), and an Onset S-TMB-M002 temperature sensor.



Figure 6: Fluke 41B Power Harmonics Analyzer

Summary of Outcomes

Test sites included two medical facilities, a corrections facility, a college campus, and two data centers. For this document the sites will be denoted as A-E. All EPS were enclosed - two were heated, one was heated and cooled and three were unconditioned. Enclosure temperatures were measured and logged during baseline and reporting periods. OAT history was obtained from local weather stations via <u>www.degreedays.net</u>.

A summary breakdown of the ICE manufacturer and model as well as enclosure type is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of test points.

				8	Base/Rep
Site ID	Site Description	ICE Make	ICE Model	Enclosure Type	Periods
Α	Medical Facility	Caterpillar	C32	unheated	Series
В	Corrections Facility	Caterpillar	3512	heated +cooled	Parallel
С	Higher Education	Cummins	KTA-50-G3	heated	Series
D	Data Center	Caterpillar	3516	unheated	Parallel
E	Data Center	Caterpillar	C27	unheated	Parallel

Once the current draw and OAT data is acquired, analysis begins. First, power consumption is calculated using the heater/heat pumps current draw, the characteristic voltage, and power factor measurements, see Table 3.

Table 2: Summary of Site A reporting period, includingheat pump supply voltage, power factor, enclosuretemperature range, and OAT range.

Site A: Reporting Period Summary						
V_char	208	VAC 1-ph				
PF_char	1	-				
T_enc_max	55	F				
T_enc_min	24	F				
T_OAT_max	58	F				
T_OAT_min	5	F				

Table 3: Truncated example of Site A's reporting period raw current draw, OAT data and power calculation.

	Measured				Cal	culat	ted
Date Time, GMT- 08:00	°F, Temp Enclosure	°F, Temp OAT KSFF	A, Aux Heater	A, Heat Pump	kW, Aux Heater	kW, Heat Pump	kW, Total
1/17/2024 13:03	35	18	31	0	6.5	0.0	6.5
1/17/2024 13:04	36	18	31	0	6.5	0.0	6.5
1/17/2024 13:04	39	18	31	0	6.5	0.0	6.5
1/17/2024 13:04	39	18	31	0	6.5	0.0	6.5
1/17/2024 13:04	39	18	31	0	6.5	0.0	6.5
1/17/2024 13:04	38	18	31	0	6.5	0.0	6.5
1/17/2024 13:04	37	18	31	0	6.5	0.0	6.5

We can now calculate the average power draw at given OAT, referred to as binning. Table 4 provides an example of the binned analysis.

Table 4: Truncated example of Site A's binned average heat pump and auxiliary heater power draw at various OAT; counts are the number of entries recorded during the period at the given OAT.

Bin: Ave Power vs OAT							
°F,OAT	kW, ave total	°F,enc	Counts				
58	0.49	54	720				
57	0.57	54	720				
56	0.45	53	360				
55	0.43	54	360				
52	0.61	53	720				
51	0.48	53	720				
50	0.57	54	360				
49	0.49	53	720				
48	0.57	51	2,160				



Figure 7: Graph of binned average power consumption; note reporting period's two data sets above and below 40F.

A graphical version is provided in Figure 7; this is where the benefit of the heat pump starts to become clear. Note the heat pump performance curve is shifted down from the baseline curve at the same OAT. Air-source Heat pumps have performance limitations as air temperature drops below 40°F. The auxiliary heater starts to be triggered by the heat pump's controls as the heat pump cannot move enough heat to meet demand; the straight flat curve above 40°F, changes, the slope increases and shifts upward. Eventually, if the ambient temperature dropped far enough, the heat pump performance curve would eventually meet the baseline curve as the heat pump's ability to move heat is negated. Curve fits, shown in Figure 7, based on experimental data, are created and used to predict energy use during a Typical Meteorological Year, reference Table 5 for an example.

Table 5 Truncated example of extrapolation of Site A's annual energy consumption during a TMY for the baseline and EEM systems.

Binning 1	MY3 Data	Baseline	Reporting
F, ОАТ	hr, yearly hour at this temp	kWh, annual TMY3 Spokane	kWh, annual TMY3 Spokane
97	3	0.0	0.5
96	0	0.0	0.0
95	5	0.0	1.0
94	19	0.0	3.8
93	0	0.0	0.0
92	22	1.9	4.6
91	0	0.0	0.0
90	38	7.1	8.5
89	0	0.0	0.0
88	37	10.7	8.7
87	0	0.0	0.0
86	30	11.7	7.4
85	71	31.4	17.9
84	0	0.0	0.0

With the TMY extrapolated performance data, annual energy consumption for the baseline and EEM systems are summed and compared. The results for the five sites are presented in Table 6.

Baseline Energy kWh/yr Site A 20,236 Site B 36,873 Site C 21,588 Site C 20,000		Heat Pump Energy kWh/yr	Energy Savings kWh/yr	% Reduce Energy		
Site A	20,236	4,035	16,201	80%		
Site B	36,873	7,318	29,555	80%		
Site C	21,588	3,416	18,172	84%		
Site D	48,601	11,919	36,682	75%		
Site E	16,440	4,737	11,703	71%		
Average	28,748	6,285	22,463	78%		

Table 6: Summary of testing analysis results.

The heat pump system reduced energy use for all five sites. Total savings varies (11,703-36,682kWh/yr TMY) with enclosure type (conditioned vs unconditioned) and physical size of the ICE; for this effort the heat pump saved an average 22,463 kWh/yr. One a percentage basis, the savings averaged 78% reduction. Details of each site's analysis and results are provided in the appendix.

Effects on the Facility

What effect does a 22,463kWh reduction on energy usage have on a facility? First there are utility costs and secondly there are the utility's reduced Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions required to generate energy. Both benefits are variable, depending on each utility's rates and mix of energy resources, respectively.

Cost Savings

The outcomes for a customer served by an electric utility in Great Britain will not match a customer in Mexico City or Spokane Washington USA (see Table 7 for examples of average regional commercial rates).

Table 7: Average U.S. regional electrical energy costs per Energy Information Agency; link to website provided in appendix.

	Ave Commercial
U.S. Region	Elect Rate
New England	\$0.2363 /kWh
Middle Atlantic	\$0.1711 /kWh
East North Central	\$0.1270 /kWh
West North Central	\$0.0984 /kWh
South Atlantic	\$0.1126 /kWh
East South Central	\$0.1302 /kWh
West South Central	\$0.0892 /kWh
Mountain	\$0.1075 /kWh
Pacific Contiguous	\$0.1938 /kWh
Pacific Noncontiguous	\$0.2996 /kWh
U.S. Total	\$0.1309 /kWh

For example, Table 8 estimates cost savings for the average Avista Washington State largecommercial customer as well as the average U.S. commercial customer. Reference the ²Avista website and the ³Energy Information Agency for current rate details. Be aware, rates

² www.myavista.com

change often, calculation examples provided are intended to provide an estimate.

Table 8: Summary of results including average annualcost savings for an Avista Washington State largecommercial customer.

	Energy Savings kWh/yr	% Reduce Energy	Ave. Avista Cost Savings*	Ave. U.S. Cost Savings**	GHG Reduce*** tonne/yr
Site A	16,201	80%	\$1,735 /yr	\$2,320 /yr	3.62
Site B	29,555	80%	\$3,165 /yr	\$4,233 /yr	6.60
Site C	18,172	84%	\$1,946 /yr	\$2,603 /yr	4.06
Site D	36,682	75%	\$3,928 /yr	\$5,254 /yr	8.19
Site E	11,703	71%	\$1,253 /yr	\$1,676 /yr	2.61
Average	22,463	78%	\$2,405 /yr	\$3,217 /yr	5.01

*Cost savings based upon Avista large commercial rate schedule WA021; includes demand savings **Assumed demand rate same as Avista WA021

***GHG emission reduction based upon Avista's resource mix; referfence appendix

The average commercial electric rate for the USA is \$0.13/kWh.

Greenhous Gas Reduction

Like rates, resource mixes vary drastically across utilities. Avista is in the Pacific Northwest of the United States where hydro generation is the dominant resource. As of 2024, it is 49% of Avista's mix (Figure 8). Hydro generation emits zero GHGs.



Figure 8: Avista's energy resource mix as of 2024; reference www.myavista.com.

³https://www.eia.gov/electricity/monthly/epm_tabl e_grapher.php?t=epmt_5_6_a

This means that benefits of the heat pump system are not fully realized when compared to a customer served by utility with 100% ⁴coal generation, see Table 9.

Table 9: Greenhouse gas reduction for an Avista customer and for comparison emission reduction for customers of utilities with 100% coal fired generation and 100% natural gas fired turbine generation.

	Energy Savings kWh/yr	% Reduce Energy	Avista GHG Reduce tonne/yr	100% Coal GHG Reduce tonne/yr	100% Nat. Gas GHG Reduce tonne/yr
Site A	16,201	80%	3.6	17.0	7.1
Site B	29,555	80%	6.6	31.0	12.9
Site C	18,172	84%	4.1	19.0	7.9
Site D	36,682	75%	8.2	38.4	16.0
Site E	11,703	71%	2.6	12.3	5.1
Average	22,463	78%	5.0	23.5	9.8

Customer's of a 100% coal burning utility will curtail 23.5 metric tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions with the heat pump; 9.8 tonnes for a 100% natural gas burning utility.

Conclusion

The five heat pump retrofits resulted in noticeable reduction in energy consumption, with performance aligning with heat pump technology in HVAC and water heating applications. Customers with a large (750kW-2.5MW) EPS can benefit from retrofitting the units with this technology.

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⁴Average GHG output per kWh for generation of a given fuel type

https://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.php?id=74&t=1



Appendix: Summary of Results for Each Site



	Enclosure Type	ICE Make	ICE Model	ICE Disp (L)	Baseline kWh/TMY	He k\	at Pun Nh/TM	np Y	Savings kWh/TMY	% R	educ	
ite C: Higher Ed.	heated	Cummins	KTA-50-G3	50.3	21,588	3,416			18,172	8	84%	
						Sit	e C Base	line	Site C	Repo	rting	
9.0	Site C: Ave	rage Powe	er vs OAT			Ave	Power v	S OA	Ave Po	wer v	S OAT	
8.0				• Repo	orting		Power	te	(J. (F)	ave, kw	unts	
				Base	line	A	Ne		NO	<u>م</u> ا	8	
7.0						76	22	12	83	0.27	48	
<u> </u>						75	3.0	6	82	0.27	/1	
9 6.0						74	2.8	6	80	0.31	78	
Po						72	2.5	36	79	0.29	66	
භූ 5.0						71	2.5	12	78	0.23	66	
a la						70	2.0	36	77	0.32	60	
¥ 4.0						69	2.2	36	76	0.33	78	
			y = -0.	0089x + 2.977	7	68	2.4	48	75	0.33	42	
₹ 3.0			R ²	= 0.5763		67	2.5	40	74	0.36	1,44	
)		****	******************	1111 A.	<u>.</u>	66	2.5	66	73	0.35	84	
2.0					-	65	2.0	60	72	0.35	90	
			y = -0.0017	(+0.4821		64	2.4	12	70	0.40	1.08	
1.0			R* = 0.	2302		62	2.2	1 20	69	0.38	1,80	
				********		63	2.4	1,20	68	0.41	66	
0.0						61	2.5	50	67	0.32	1,38	
0 1	0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 8					60	2.4	06	66	0.37	1,44	
		(F), OA	Г			50	2.4	90	65	0.39	1,38	
						59	2.3	30	64	0.39	1,62	
						58	2.4	1,20	63	0.38	2,63	
00	Site C: Encl	osure Temp	vs OAT			5/	2.4	1,38	62	0.37	1,50	
90						56	2.5	1,02	60	0.30	1,02	
80						55	2.5	1,50	59	0.36	1.92	
80			AAAA AA AAAA			54	2.4	1,38	58	0.40	2,40	
70	A A A A A		y = 0.1932x + 6	6.418		53	2.6	1,32	57	0.35	1,26	
70			R ² = 0.750	7		52	2.6	2,48	4 56	0.39	2,46	
Ψ co						51	2.5	2,16	55	0.39	1,44	
atur						50	2.4	2,46	0 54	0.40	1,86	
ber						49	2.5	3,24	0 53	0.34	84	
L 50						48	2.6	3,12	52	0.39	1,32	
nre						47	2.5	4,02	50	0.40	1 220	
<u>6</u> 40						46	2.6	3,00	49	0.40	90	
), El						45	2.6	3,60	48	0.41	1,08	
<u>ш</u> 30						44	2.6	2,76	47	0.37	60	
						43	2.7	5,16	46	0.44	60	
20						42	2.6	2,88	45	0.45	60	
						41	2.6	3,87	2 43	0.43	30	
10						40	2.6	5,88	41	0.41	30	



