

## **Proactive AC Power Monitoring No Longer Needs an Electrician**

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AC power meters and power recorders have a long history as an electrician's tool. Extra features, a complicated installation and hefty price tag ensure these devices are left to an electrical expert.

Documentation of power quality on an ongoing basis is the fundamental purpose of any AC power monitor. When effective, the power monitor identifies a problem before it becomes a crisis. For many power problems, an efficient power monitor need only pinpoint the area, size, frequency and duration of an unhealthy AC power situation to meet a home or business owner's needs.

Not all power monitors are the same, but any AC power device built by industry experts should give piece of mind that the job will be completed and the user alerted to an AC problem as it develops. Look for a monitor that does not need an electrician for installation, tracking or logging of AC voltage and frequency. This will save time and money and allow you to remain in control of the monitoring process. Another time saving approach is to purchase several units to monitor multiple locations, equipment and circuits. There are affordable devices on the market, so cost should never be a barrier to an easy and successful installation.

### **How can you tell if your utility has a problem?**

There are more than 3,170 traditional electric utilities in the United States. They are responsible for ensuring an adequate and reliable source of electricity to all consumers in their service territories at a reasonable cost. Hundreds of millions of users will experience an electrical outage in the next 12 months. Tracking and recording electrical events is the user's responsibility if they want to prove frequency and duration to the power company.

### **Protect your home from power problems**

Homeowners make significant investments in their home electronics. The top five consumer electronic growth sectors in the next 12 months, according to Consumer Electronics Association, will be digital video recorders, network routers/hubs, MP3Players, cable modems and digital cameras. In addition, CEA anticipates that the total home theater investment per household for the coming year will be \$1,700, with non-owner households estimated at \$1,400.

On average, an entry-level home theater system costs a whopping \$3,500. Protecting expensive equipment through proactively monitoring a utility company's power flow is sensible, easy and affordable with a portable utility device. In addition to

investing in an affordable AC power monitor, homeowners should take the following precautions:

- Use a surge protector to prevent power spikes.
- Shut down all equipment, if possible, by disconnecting power cables, including telephone line, until a storm passes.
- Plug all expensive equipment into a battery backup.
- Be proactive in reporting problems

### **Protect your business from power problems**

Organizations rely on sophisticated electronic equipment for day-to-day operations. Downtime can mean a loss in revenue, data and customers. An accurate, simple and inexpensive method to track and record power fluctuations can be found in a simple power monitor. It identifies power flow trends that allow a business to sustain infrastructure performance and increase dependability. Monitoring power fluctuations is just one step to preparedness in the event of an AC power outage. Businesses should also prepare in the following way:

- Have a plan that you can follow in the event of a prolonged power outage.
- Identify critical equipment that must be maintained in the event of an outage and consolidate it under common circuits
- Consider installing a surge protector between the power supply and your valuable equipment to handle power surges and spikes.
- Invest in an uninterrupted power supply (UPS) to keep equipment operating when the power does go out.
- Monitor protection devices yearly to make sure they are operating properly.

### **Summary**

AC power is a key component to living a comfortable life. We take for granted that the power company will generate and transmit power in a supply that meets their daily demand. A lack of power is at best an inconvenience and at worst a loss in personal production. Homeowners can mitigate the negative effect of power fluctuations through proactively monitoring their AC power supply, along with careful preparation in the event of a power outage.