

*Decommissioning your data center can become an unexpected and significant cost. If your generator must be removed, there are a myriad of considerations and logistical challenges.*

Removing of a generator(s) as part of your decommissioning plan presents some unique challenges. Here are some aspects to consider.

**Do Nothing Option.** The lowest cost and logistically easiest option is to leave the generator. However, make sure there is no liability (financial, legal, environmental) associated with leaving it and obtain the appropriate signoffs from whom-ever will take ownership of it. [This applies to all equipment]. If the data center will remain, then clearly a generator is a needed asset and attention would then turn to the value of the asset. Estimate what it would cost for the new owner to furnish and install a generator and start from there. The useful life of a well-maintained unit is easily 25 years.

**What is being supported?** Are there other systems/operations requiring generator support? This is often the case if your data center is located in a multi-use building. Is the generator supporting any life-safety systems? While it may be over-sized for load that will remain, the need still exists, and it may be less costly to leave it rather than replace it with a smaller unit.

**Leverage expertise and ecosystem.** In a stand-alone data center application, removal is straightforward as all systems will be removed. However, if part of shared building, it is vital the remaining electrical system is not adversely affected by the decommissioning work. Leverage your building electrical contractor, who best knows your electrical infrastructure, for planning and cost estimates. Additionally, tap into the ecosystem of generator vendors who decommission them and will offer to purchase your generator and support your electrical contractor. Check with multiple companies to maximize offer value and support logistics.

Make you sure understand how will fuel removal be undertaken and that all the components will be removed including switchgear, paralleling gear (if applicable), and ATS equipment. If the fuel storage is below ground, how specifically will that need to be addressed both logistically and from an approval perspective? Will the scheduling of a crane for the generator removal have to occur during off hours, and will there be permitting required?

**Understand scope.** Considering the complexities addressed above, it is vital that the generator decommission scope of work is complete and detailed. Make sure that the timeline provided in the SOW is detailed and includes lead-time for notification and removal of all assets. There may be civil construction work required such as the removal of the housing (if applicable), concrete pad, fencing, and/or bollards. If you are vacating leased space, ensure that the property manager reviews the scope and provides any concerns. Have the decommissioning contractor/vendor provide you written confirmation that all assets will be disposed of in the proper (environmental, etc.) manner. Based upon timing, you may have to request a "grace period" as completing all of the work may extend past the lease completion date. For additional discussion see [Data Center Decommissioning Series: Your Project Plan](#).



#### About the Author

Tad Davies is a 33-year veteran of the data center industry. He advises clients nationally on Business Centric strategy issues such as consolidation, provider selection, and build vs. buy and Facility Centric strategy issues such as risk assessment, conceptual planning, and owner's representation. Tad is President of Fodere which provides data center guidance.

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