

K-TOR Human-Power Generators – Review

By Capt. William E. Simpson



The first question that some people might ask is: Why would I want to consider a human powered generator when I could use solar? This is a logical question given the latest developments in compact flexible/fold-able [solar panels](#). The problem we all have with [solar panels](#) is that they don't work when the sun is too low on the horizon or at night, and when there is real heavy cloud cover, the output is too low. Essentially, there's a big power blackout window that occurs, and if you don't happen to have a charged battery handy, you are out of luck. In a disaster, this can mean the difference between life and death. Additionally there are other indoor areas that have no access to sunlight, such as a bunker or a similar location, where these units can be valuable assets.

The K-TOR human-powered generators fill this 'blackout gap' and can power some devices directly or provide useful amounts of energy to charge small and medium capacity batteries for later use.

Recently I got my hands on a couple models of K-TOR human-powered generators; the Power Box, which is a pedal driven (like a bicycle) generator and the Pocket Socket, a hand cranked generator. And I gave both of them a whirl... and here's what I found:

I am a stickler for quality... being old-school and all, and I lived a good portion of my life in the past era when quality and endurance minded products were the mainstay of our society, which is considerably different today, where many companies have a 'use for a while and then discard or upgrade' attitude.

The first thing I noticed about both units (Pocket Socket and Power Box) was that they were very well made yet extremely light-weight through the use of high-strength ABS plastic and corrosion resistant alloys. This in my mind makes both units great choices for Bug-Out bags where weight is critical.

The Pocket Socket is very compact and the unit performs as stated by the company; they have a nice video up on their website that shows the Pocket Socket in action, which I couldn't possibly improve upon, so here it is:

It's always a bummer when you get a product and it doesn't quite work the way you thought...the Pocket Socket did not disappoint and even my grand kids could make use of it due to its versatile gearing, which allows ease of use by young and old alike!

And it's really simple and easy to use! Just pull it out, plug in a device and start cranking! It puts out a very convenient 10 watts of power at 120 volts AC, which allows you to plug-in all kinds of devices (not to exceed 10 watts draw) as well as small [battery chargers](#). This allows the use of a wide variety of devices, like radio receivers and small radio transceivers (walkie talkies), GPS, cameras, games, phones, etc. They even have an adapter to convert to the European 2-pin configuration!

So what's the bottom line on this great little generator? It's very reasonably priced at \$65.00 online. Considering the compact-quality of this device, it represents good value. And I really like the fact that, like all K-TOR products, it's made in America and was the brainchild of an American, Ken Torino the founder and president of K-TOR.

Moving on to the award-winning 'Power Box'; given the compact design and relatively light weight of this unit, this powerful 20 watt (120 VAC) generator is a definite candidate for a Bug-Out bag! And from my chair it should be standard equipment in any bunker since it can offer a significant source of power when other systems fail. That said it's a bit more complicated than the Pocket Socket in that it requires just a tad of assembly before you can begin pedaling this efficient little generator just like a bicycle! Here again the company has an excellent video that makes learning the assembly process a snap:

Basically, you just snap-on the pedals and then secure the support rails to unit and you're ready to use it. Because pedaling this unit is so easy, even kids will find it a breeze to use, even for long periods. And the potent 20 watt output allows the use of multiple devices at the same time (not to exceed 20 watts total draw), or to charge a storage battery.

I have to say that I fully expected this unit to cost several hundred dollars given its power and versatility, however, the good news is the unit sells for \$195.00 online, which in my book is a bargain!

One thing I know many people will appreciate is that K-TOR is an American company and its products are American made, thereby supporting American families! And of course, K-TOR warranties all of its products.

By having your own K-TOR human-powered generator you can bridge the 'blackout gap' and significantly augment the redundancy of your power sources both in emergencies and off the grid! I highly recommend both of these units.

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Semper Veritas / Semper Paratus

Frequent contributor, Capt. William E. Simpson II is a U.S. Merchant Marine Officer with decades of boating and expedition sailing experience, who has successfully survived long-term off the grid at remote uninhabited desert islands with his family using sailboats that he equipped for that purpose. Capt. Bill holds a U.S.C.G. 500-ton captain's license for commercial inspected passenger vessels, including, power, sail and assistance towing vessels. He is also the author of many articles on sailing and the book 'The Nautical Prepper' (Ulysses Press) You can read more from the Nautical Prepper on Capt. Bill's personal site at www.williamsimpson.com

