

How much a power cut can impact your business

In June 2017, there was a power cut that affected an estimate of 63,000 properties in North Lancashire, and Edinburgh Airport had to delay flights within the same month due to a power-related issue. With more than 170,000 km of electricity cables to maintain, power cuts will sometimes happen. But how much can they affect businesses?

Working with retailers of LPG, Flogas, we investigate the cost to business if power outages occur and what can be done to protect your company from an unplanned disruption.

The causes of power cuts

There are many causes to power cuts, one of them being harsh weather conditions. In January 2015, one million people across North Eastern Scotland were left without power as a storm struck the power lines. Similarly, in Florida following Hurricane Irma's path of destruction, 4.4 million homeowners were left without electricity.

There has also been a growing electricity supply gap which has also been another reason. Jenifer Baxter, head of energy and environment at the Institution of Mechanical Engineers said, "Under current [government] policy, it is almost impossible for UK electricity demand to be met by 2025,". Alongside proposals to phase out coal-fired power and a lack of investment in national grid infrastructures, power failures and blackouts are expected to become more common.

There have been uncommon reasons that have caused blackouts. One report in Somerset had revealed a squirrel had bit through power cables, which left 1,000 homes without electricity.

Where you live can also play a factor on how many power cuts, which you may experience. The South of England had suffered the most blackouts in the UK in 2015 with 124 incidents.

Power failures last mostly a few hours but some can last days or even weeks. Regardless of their cause, they are inconvenient and can have detrimental effects on businesses.

How much can they cost your business?

Averagely, a power cut last 50 minutes in the UK. It may not sound a lot but, a single hour of downtime can cost a small business an estimate of £800 – it could be very damage.

Larger organisations can understandably see higher losses from a power cut but there are also expected to recover quicker. In 2013, Google had lost their power and experienced losses of £100,000 per minute!

They're various reasons to losses. Having no access to electricity can stop employees from communicating with customers, which can lead to potential sales being lost. For an ecommerce company, they do not have access to their website to monitor sales and client requests. There is also the risk of losing unsaved material which can be costly to small businesses.

How to decrease damage?

Mostly, power cuts can be caused by reasons beyond our control. However, there are certain steps that small businesses can take to reduce the damage caused from a power cut.

The first step is to purchase a UPS (uninterruptible power supply). This allows a computer to keep running for a short while when the mains electricity has gone off. Often, a warning sign will come up to alert the user that a power cut has occurred – giving them time to save any unfinished work.

There is also the option of a standalone generator; this can be used in emergencies for when power runs out as it does not rely on the working of the grid electricity. If you are considering going off-grid with your power supplies, it is worth considering a [gas cylinder](#) too.

Aside from these two actions, you can ensure that you are saving your work regularly and have a contingency plan. This could be a way to inform customers that your power supply is down and you won't be able to answer queries – this maybe on a mobile device.

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