

## **The cost of a power cut to your business**

In June 2017, a power cut had left an estimate of 63,000 properties in North Lancashire without power, and Edinburgh Airport had to delay flights within the same month because of power-related incidents. With more than 170,000 km of electricity cables to maintain, power cuts will sometimes happen. But how much can they affect businesses?

Together, with retailers of LPG, Flogas, we examine the costs that power outages could cause for businesses if they occur and we look at what could be done to protect your company from an unplanned disruption.

### **Power cut causes**

Power cuts can be caused by various reasons, 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.

The electricity supply gap has also increased which is causing blackouts. 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.

Your location could also play a key factor to how many power cuts you may witness. The South of England had suffered the most blackouts in the UK in 2015 with 124 incidents.

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

Usually power failures last 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.

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On average, power outages 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 expect to see higher losses from a power cut but are also expected to recover quicker. In 2013, Google had lost their power and experienced losses of £100,000 per minute!

The reasons of losses can vary. 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 minimise the damages**

Power cuts are mostly caused by reasons beyond our control. However, there are options that small businesses could take to reduce the damage caused by one.

One helpful solution would be 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.

A standalone generator could also be good option; it can be used in emergencies for when power runs out as it doesn't rely on power from the main grid. 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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