

Annex M: Utility Failures / Blackouts / Brownouts

Emergency Actions

Nature of the Hazard

The City of South Portland is subject to utility failures, energy shortages and electrical brownouts and blackout events. An energy event could be the result of terrorism, a short term crisis (when unplanned and unexpected events impact energy supply resources), a regional crisis such as a cascading power blackout (as happened in August 2003 in the Northeast US), or a longer term event such as a power blackout during high energy use seasons such as extremely hot summers or extremely cold winters. Energy events can be initiated by several factors, including political events, natural disasters (hurricanes, ice storms that disrupts energy supply routes or increases demand), high summer or winter demands that cannot be met with existing fuel supplies, disruptions in natural gas, refined oil products (fuel oil, kerosene, natural gas, wood and other sources) and other factors.

Based on lessons learned from a past emergency preparedness tabletop exercise this plan assumes any power outage will last at least 24 hours.

Risk Area

The entire city is subject to the effects of a power brown out (decrease in voltage that may disrupt businesses before it disrupts residential areas) or a power blackout (complete loss of power).

Direction and Control

Small power events or transients are handled by city departments without any emergency assistance. If a power event is likely going to be a citywide issue, then the Emergency Operations Center should be activated to manage emergency response actions citywide. A scene specific Incident Commander will generally not be needed for a large-scale power event.

The Emergency Management Director (City Manager) may designate a senior department head or the EMA Director to manage EOC operations in response to blackout and other power related emergency conditions.

A liaison officer should be dispatched to the Cumberland County EOC, if opened, as CMP will station a staff member at the CCEMA EOC to keep all CC communities apprised of outage conditions, estimates for system restoration, problems encountered, etc.

Communications

Normal city radio communications channels will be used to manage response to loss of power conditions. Loss of power events are likely to overload telephone, cell phone and two-way radio systems that are not backed up by emergency diesel generators (EDGs).

Warning

Electrical disruption events may come with short advance notice (e.g. rolling brownouts and blackouts), no advance warning, or may be known hours in advance. In any event, areas or the city that may be in danger because of loss of power will be warned via methods described in the All Hazards Emergency Plan, including use of the EAS system, use of police officers and firefighters using bullhorns and other devices, using the emergency warning system designed for the hard of hearing and other means. Warning messages and methods will be coordinated by the EOC staff, if activated.

Emergency Public Information

Emergency Public Information (EPI) will be issued as necessary by the EOC staff, through the Public Information Officer (PIO). Methods of EPI dissemination include using the TV camera mounted in the Joint Information Center (JIC). This JIC camera is connected to the SPC TV broadcast studio at City Hall, allowing emergency instructions to be broadcast through SPC TV to about 12,000 households in South Portland and Cape Elizabeth

News releases will be developed as needed by the PIO, approved by the EOC Manager, and then disseminated to the public through Portland area radio, TV and print media outlets as well as city website and social media sites.

Evacuation

EOC staff would determine, based on current power conditions, forecast power conditions, road conditions, generator, and other factors, if evacuation of the public were necessary. Appropriate evacuation routes would be developed in the EOC, approved by the EOC Manager, and then broadcast to the public via the EPI system described above. A combination of police officers, firefighters, public works staff, and appropriate barricades and other traffic control devices would be employed to effect the evacuation in an orderly and timely manner.

Mass Care

EOC staff will determine if mass care facilities should be opened and manned. The primary mass care facility in South Portland is the Community Center on Nelson Street, behind the South Portland High School. Approximately 1,000 evacuees can be processed in this mass care facility. Other city facilities, including the High School, and both Middle Schools can be used as mass care shelters.

Health and Medical Concerns

The Portland Water District may be contacted once power has been out for some time to ensure the safety of the drinking water supply. Local officials may mandate “boil water” orders for those on well water systems or others as determined necessary. Area hospitals with EDGs would implement their emergency plans to deal with loss of power events. Local medical resources are deemed to be adequate to deal with power outage or power event victims.

Resource Management

Local resources may not be adequate to deal with extended loss of power events. If additional resources are needed, Cumberland County Office of Emergency Management will be contacted by the South Portland EOC and requested to facilitate the procurement of additional needed resources.

The municipal gas supply (about 18,000 gallons of gasoline) located at the Public Works complex on O'Neil St. has an EDG which can be used to pump gas to emergency vehicles in a complete power outage. Additional generators are available to provide power to localized facilities and locations. A large EDG is in place at the public safety complex to power the EOC and maintain essential fire and police operations in a loss of power event.

Specific Actions for Electrical Disruption Events

Fire Department Actions

- Respond as requested by the EOC.
- Increase resources to deal with downed power lines, electrical fires, citizen requests for assistance, etc.
- Prepare/assist in deploying traffic signal generators

Police Department Actions

- Request mutual aid assistance as needed to protect against criminal acts that may occur or increase in frequency during a blackout event, such as looting.
- Respond as requested by the EOC.
- Test the public safety generator, ensure sufficient fuel is available, and run as needed.
- Test communications systems and develop alternate means of communication as needed.
- Using the attached chart depicting how CMP would shed electrical load in parts of South Portland, be prepared to rotate officers around to key intersections in each affected area.
- Prepare/assist in deploying traffic signal generators

Public Works Actions

- Test the generator at the public works complex and ensure sufficient fuel to power the city gas pumps.
- Provide resources as requested by the EOC.
- Prepare/assist in deploying traffic signal generators

EOC Actions

- Develop response plans to deal with the effects of a power brownout or blackout.
- Work closely with CCEMA and MEMA staffs to coordinate resource deployment and determine the severity and expected length of any electrical outage.
- Coordinate deployment of city resources, including transportation resources, to deal with the power event. Focus on the following priorities:
 - Priority 1: Immediate response to emergency services facilities, including police, fire and dispatch services, including power to communications systems

transmitters/voters. Priority 1 also includes key traffic intersection lights and key railroad crossings.

- Priority 2: Response within the first two hours to nursing homes, medical facilities and offices, schools (public and private) and high rise buildings (e.g. people trapped in elevators, people without heat or lights).
- Priority 3: Response within the first 6 hours, for water facilities, wastewater treatment facility needs, etc.
- Priority 4: Response on call basis to lower priority calls, such as public assembly areas such as the Maine Mall and other commercial or industrial properties.
- Open and publicize warming/cooling centers to allow people to warm up and charge their electronics
- Open shelters, as needed, to take care of people who cannot heat or cool their houses, or cook food.
- Request Cumberland County EOC dispatch one or more HAM radio operators to South Portland to provide alternate means of communications between the dispatch center, EOC, shelter, Maine Mall and other critical facilities as needed.
- Consider using city or school buses as roving “warming/cooling stations” if people in blacked out areas do not want to leave their property and go to a shelter.
- Check on available community services (e.g. gas stations that can still pump gas, ATM machines that are working, etc) and roll this information into periodic press releases.

IF Central Maine Power CO. implements their Operating Plan # 7 (OP-7), the chart below depicts what sections of the city may be blacked out. As the step numbers are subject to change, no step number is listed by CMP. Rolling blackouts are expected to last up to 1-2 hours per area listed in the steps below.

Step	Location
	Scarborough—east of I-95
	Portland Islands: Cushings, Peaks, the Diamonds. So. Portland: Knightville east to Cape Elizabeth;

	Westbrook: County Rd. from Spring St. to Scarborough town line
	Gorham: Downtown and east to Westbrook
	Portland: Libbytown and Brighton Ave.
	Portland: Commercial St.; So. Portland: Western Avenue, Maine Mall Road
	South Portland: Maine Mall
	Portland: Woodfords Corner, Morrills Corner, Deering, North Deering