



EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMAND AND CONTROL GROUP IN EFFECT

This press release has been issued jointly by St Helena Government and Connect Saint Helena Ltd.

Earlier today, Friday 20 January 2023, SHG enacted its emergency planning protocols and convened an Incident Command and Control Group. This is in response to the announcement yesterday afternoon that a major fault had been experienced at the power station, resulting in only two generators currently being able to provide power to the Island.

In line with SHG's emergency planning procedures, the group is being led by the Chief Secretary, Susan O'Bey, and is formed of key officials from Connect St Helena Ltd, the emergency services and SHG.

Whilst power currently remains stable, the group is working to ensure that appropriate action is taking place to prevent the current situation from worsening and to ensure that planning is underway in case there is a further loss of power generation capacity.

As per the announcements from Connect yesterday, the two active generators are able to provide sufficient capacity to the Island to meet its regular demand. However, were any further issues to be experienced in either of these generators, or demand to increase above ordinary levels, it is likely that there would not be enough power capacity to meet the periods of peak demand across the Island. Peak periods are most notably around the onset of regular working hours and in the evenings.

If that were the case, Connect would need to implement a programme of managed load shedding. This would require managing the distribution of power effectively, which would in practice see the supply of electricity to premises limited to only certain hours during the day.

It should be noted that whilst this is not expected to be needed, the public are nonetheless advised to make suitable preparations for such an occurrence.

With very limited resilience currently in the power system, the Island is also at greater risk of a more significant loss of power, even if only temporary. Authorities in Connect and SHG are working extremely hard to ensure this is avoided, but once again the public are nonetheless advised to make suitable preparations for such an occurrence.

To help avoid the electricity grid being overloaded with demand, until further notice the public are requested to reduce electricity consumption to essential needs only. Those with back-up generators are advised to ensure that they are adequately fuelled, and firms reliant on IT systems are encouraged to back these up.

In the event of a more serious loss of power over an extended period of time, it is likely that some areas of the telecommunications network and water distribution network may be temporarily affected. Connect has identified those areas of the water network likely to be affected and are currently working to ensure that were this to happen, the impact is minimised.

Many key services such as the Hospital, Airport, larger retailers and certain communications towers have back-up generator capacity which will allow them to continue operating regardless.

However, when considering the possibility of more substantial or sustained periods of loss of power, including managed load shedding, members of the public and businesses that do not have access to generators are advised to adhere to the following guidance:

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. Most food requiring refrigeration can be kept safely in a closed refrigerator for several hours. An unopened refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours. A full freezer will keep its temperature for about 48 hours.
- Try to keep your mobile phone, and where applicable your VHF radios, fully charged. This will help ensure that, where available, you have access to communications and are able to access the internet to communicate with others and view important information online. If you can access the internet, check the Connect website and Facebook page regularly for updates.
- Stay in touch with family and friends if communications allow, and check up on those that might be more vulnerable.
- Manage your resources effectively. You don't want torches or lamps to run out of battery when needed.
- Turn off or disconnect appliances and other equipment in case of a momentary power "surge" when the power comes back on, as this can damage computers and other devices.

This advice remains in effect until further notice.

The Incident Command and Control Group want to reassure the public that authorities are doing everything they can to effectively manage the situation. The power supply is currently stable and is being constantly monitored. Nonetheless, planning is taking place to make sure that were the situation to worsen the impacts of this can be managed as best as possible under the circumstances.

Any queries on this matter can be directed to Connect by phone on 22255 or by email through enquiries@connect.co.sh.

#StHelena #MajorIncident #EmergencyPlanning

SHG

20 January 2023