

ENERGY FAILURE

Since each energy shortage is unique, it is impossible to envision every event or situation which might qualify as, or lead to, an energy emergency, and thus develop detailed specific response plans for every case. Instead, this plan recognizes that an emergency response is based on successful working relationships among people. Further, this plan provides a management structure, which identifies those relationships and provides a process to leverage those relationships during an energy shortage.

Widespread energy shortage or outages such as the August 2003 blackout in the northeastern part of the country are not likely to occur in California. The electrical grid within the State and surrounding areas has been constructed so as to minimize cascading outages. Through selective switching, the cascade effects can be mitigated. However, energy shortages are possible and will occur from time to time within the State similar to the shortage that occurred in the summer of 2001.

Stage III energy shortages could be caused by a terrorist event which disrupts multiple power generating stations at a time when other stations around the State are off line for maintenance and repair. Such an incident could include the bombing of one or more local generation stations along with the destruction of trunk lines coming into the area. The likelihood of such an occurrence is low, but not impossible. In such a scenario, the local area would be unable to generate enough electricity and the ability to bring power in from outside the area would be reduced due to the damage to trunk lines.

Energy shortages occur when demand for power approaches the capacity to produce power. To reduce the potential for a sudden surge of demand exceeding production capabilities, the State has instituted a series of alerts to warn consumers as demand begins to rise. This condition is most likely to occur in the hot summer months between late morning and early evening.

Under a Stage III Alert the affected areas will suffer rotating outages. These are short periods of time when the power to a geographic area is either cut off or reduced. The intent of this process is to reduce overall demand to more manageable levels based on the available capacity to produce power. The public, and more specifically government and businesses, are notified in advance of the rotating outages so measures can be taken to minimize the impact of the short-term rotating outage. During these periods critical, essential, and key facilities may have to operate on emergency generators for the duration of the rotating outages. Generally speaking, these rotating outages should have little to no effect on the surrounding community beyond annoyance and inconvenience.