

The Electricity just went off...

March 2004



On August 14, 2003 shortly after 4:00 PM EDT, a massive power outage occurred in the northeastern U. S. and eastern Canada that affected about 50 million people. The cause and cure remain to be determined, but the effect was immediate and profound.

Amid this disaster, one thing seemed to be missing. There were no catastrophic releases of toxic chemicals, major fires or explosions from chemical or petrochemical plants!

Is your plant safe ?

Would your plant do as well?

What You Can Do to Keep Your Plant Safe in an Electrical Outage



Research—Make sure you know this...

- Find out which instruments and equipment are on the emergency power system and which ones are not. Know how to compensate for the controls that will be lost.
- Review the operating instructions of the emergency power system. Know how long it is expected to operate. If you have an emergency generator, make sure you have operating instructions, fuel and any other items needed for its operation.
- Know the power off-fail position of key instruments and equipment. Most are probably designed to go to a “fail-safe position,” but for those that are not, you should have instructions on what to do.



Preplan—Think through what you would do...

- Think about the 1st, 2nd and 3rd things you would immediately do if the power failed. Make sure these things take care of potential emergencies and that the plant is safe.
- Know the calls and notifications that you need to make and know how to make them quickly.
- Review your emergency response plan and emergency procedures for actions to be taken.
- Accidents can occur during restart after a power outage. Know the safe restart procedure!



Practice—Walk and talk through what needs to be done...

- Talk with your co workers about what they would do and why. Develop a common plan for response to power failures. Know how to respond when all alarms sound at once.
- If you can, conduct or participate in power failure drills including the testing of emergency generators. If this is not possible, mentally walk through power failure actions.

The sudden lack of electricity can be shocking. Know your role in outages!