



Power Outage Contingency Plan

Read in conjunction with the Overstrand Disaster Management Plan

2025/2026

Defining Power Outage

A power outage is an unexpected loss of electricity caused by equipment failures, damage to power lines, grid overload, or natural disasters. It can last from minutes to days, depending on the cause and repair time, and is unplanned, requiring urgent restoration efforts. In contrast, load shedding is a controlled and intentional reduction of electricity supply to prevent grid overload when demand exceeds generation capacity. It is typically scheduled in stages, with power cuts lasting a few hours per area. While power outages occur due to faults or failures, load shedding is a preventive measure to maintain grid stability and avoid a total blackout.

Some key differences between blackouts and loadshedding are as follows:

Power Outage (Blackout)

- Causes:
 - Equipment failures (e.g., transformer malfunctions, blown fuses).
 - Damage to power lines (due to weather, accidents, or vandalism).
 - Grid overload or sudden demand spikes.
 - Natural disasters like storms, earthquakes, or floods.
- Duration: Varies—can last from a few minutes to several hours or even days, depending on the cause and repair time.
- Management: Utilities work to restore power as quickly as possible; the outage is not planned.

Load Shedding

- Causes:
 - Insufficient electricity generation to meet demand.
 - Fuel shortages for power plants.
 - Grid instability or maintenance requirements.
- Duration: Typically scheduled in stages or blocks, with predetermined time slots (e.g., 2–4 hours per area).
- Management: Utilities or government agencies implement rolling blackouts as part of demand management strategies to avoid a total system collapse.

Purpose

A total power blackout in South Africa is no longer just a theoretical possibility, making it essential to have a contingency plan in place. This plan will be activated in the event of a national power grid failure or if Overstrand Electrical & Maintenance Services is unable to supply electricity to parts or the entirety of the Overstrand area due to a man-made or natural disaster.

Response Measures

When a disastrous event occurs in Overstrand Municipality and the Chief: Fire, Rescue & Disaster Management regards the situation as a disaster in terms of the Act, the following steps must be taken:

- Initiate efforts to assess the magnitude and severity or potential magnitude and severity of the disaster.
- Alert Senior Management and Disaster Management role players in the municipal area that may be of assistance in the circumstances.
- Initiate the implementation of the disaster response plan or any contingency plans and emergency procedures that may be applicable in the circumstances.
- Inform the District, Western Cape Provincial and National Disaster Management Centre of the disaster and an initial assessment of the magnitude and severity or potential magnitude and severity of the disaster.
- The Provincial Disaster Management Centre (PDMC) monitors the situation to determine the magnitude and severity of the damages and losses.
- The affected local municipality will take a council resolution regarding the declaration of a local disaster.
- The local municipality will submit a council resolution to their District Disaster Management Centre.
- If the District Disaster Management Centre supports the decision, they will forward their council resolution together with that of the local municipality to the PDMC.
- The PDMC will assess the situation to support/or not to support the request for a declaration.
- The PDMC will recommend or not recommend the declaration process to the Provincial Cabinet.

- The PDMC will submit the Cabinet recommendation to the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) for classification.

Irrespective of whether a local state of disaster has been declared or not, the municipality is primarily responsible for the co-ordination and management of local disasters that occur in its area.

Whether or not an emergency is determined to exist, municipal and other agencies may take such actions under this policy as may be necessary to protect the lives and property of the inhabitants of the municipality. If a local state of disaster has been declared, the Council may make by-laws or issue directions, or authorise the issue of directions to:

- Assist and protect the public.
- Provide relief to the public.
- Prevent or combat disruption; or
- Deal with the destructive and other effects of the disaster.

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