WHAT IS A POWER INTERRUPTION?

Simply put, a power interruption is the loss of electricity service. Such interruptions can be very brief (less than 1/100th of a second) or varying lengths of time (minutes, hours) depending on the contributing factors. Most power interruptions are unplanned and so brief you may not notice anything more than a flicker of a light.

Interruptions that are the result of problems experienced on the electricity system can be caused by a variety of situations, the most common are: weather; trees contacting power lines; vehicle accidents; vandalism; equipment failure; and, even birds and other animals.

Most power interruptions that affect residential homes originate from outside the home (either directly from the utility’s electricity system or indirectly from problems being experienced by a neighbour).

Brief disturbances, such as a momentary dimming of lights, may also result from the operation (cutting-in and cutting-out) of larger appliances, such as refrigerators, furnaces, etc.

If you experience more than a “momentary” disturbance, this often indicates a more serious issue that may need to be investigated by Newfoundland Power and/or an electrician or electrical contractor.

Proper grounding of your electricity system is very important. It helps to ensure the operation of large appliances and equipment won’t result in momentary power disturbances or more lengthy power outages.
BUILT-IN PROTECTION
When shopping for an electronic appliance or computer, make sure you know it’s limitations. Look for equipment with a battery back-up system that will remember clock and program settings when power is lost briefly. Also, look for appliances and equipment that have protective devices built right in to the unit to prevent damage during power interruptions. To ensure you are getting the protection you need, do some research on the product you are about to purchase before going to the store; consumerreports.org and similar organizations are great resources for finding out this sort of information.

POWER BARS WITH SURGE PROTECTION
Power bars with surge protection can protect your equipment against some power interruptions. Don’t confuse these with other power bars that are simply extension cords with a circuit breaker, as these offer no protection from power interruptions.

The cost to purchase a power bar with a surge protector depends on the level of protection desired and the electrical load of equipment to be protected. These will mainly protect against over-voltage interruptions caused by the operation of motor driven appliances and equipment, up to the design limits of the protective device. Under voltage fluctuations can cause appliance or equipment damage even if surge protection is in use. When choosing surge protection, ensure that the product is CSA approved for the level of protection desired. If you are unsure, ask a sales representative for help.

IN CASE OF AN OUTAGE
If an outage occurs, you can take steps to avoid damage to your appliances and equipment. We recommend that you:

- unplug all electronic equipment and appliances such as TVs, computers and microwaves;
- turn off your range, washer, dryer and water heater (if they were in use when the outage occurred);
- turn your thermostats to the lowest setting or switch them off; and,
- keep only one light on to let you know when power has been restored.

When power has been restored:

- wait 15 minutes before turning up thermostats. For individually controlled heaters, turn them on one at a time over a 30 to 60 minute period;
- wait at least 15 minutes before turning on your electronic equipment and appliances;
- if flooding occurred, have an electrician check your electricity system before turning the power back on.

WHENEVER. WHEREVER. WE’LL BE THERE
At Newfoundland Power, we are committed to providing our customers with safe and reliable power. Unfortunately power interruptions do sometimes happen. When they do, our employees are committed to restoring power quickly and safely, 24 hours a day, in all kinds of weather.

1.800.663.2802
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