



GIBRALTAR ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY

PRESS RELEASE

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“Gibraltar Electricity Authority explains the unforeseeable combination of circumstances that has resulted in recent and ongoing power cuts”

Contrary to views expressed publicly by some commentators, the current power cuts were not predictable, could not have been anticipated and are not the result of failure to ensure a sufficient source of supply. They are the result of a supply shortage caused by an extraordinary and unprecedented coincidence of adverse occurrences against which Gibraltar has never had protection.

The Government and the GEA have available to them a total of 42 Mega Watts of installed generating capacity, to meet a demand with an annual peak of 35 Mega Watts. This represents a sufficient buffer between supply capacity and demand in ordinary circumstances. However, extraordinarily three OESCO generators representing 13 Mega Watts have suffered breakdown at the same time. Hence, the available generating capacity of 29 Mega Watts is exceeded by the current peak demand of 35 MWs.

Usually, and historically any temporary supply shortfall is covered by the importation of electricity from the MOD power station pursuant to long standing arrangements between Government and MOD to supply electricity to each other in times of need. However, this has not been possible in sufficient, and at times any quantity on this occasion because three of the MOD's six generators are also out of action due to breakdown due to shortage of available generating capacity.

This coincidence of three OESCO and three MOD generators, representing between them over 40% of Gibraltar's installed generating capacity being out of service at the same time has never happened before, was not predictable or foreseeable and could not be planned or provided for.

The result of these unprecedented coincidences of events is that there has simply been insufficient available generating capacity to meet demand at peak times resulting in power cuts currently, and in recent weeks.

In other countries with large electricity networks, local events of this sort are addressed by importing electricity from other parts of the network or even from other countries. This fall back defence against even extraordinary circumstances and occurrences is not available in Gibraltar.

Despite the fact that the unprecedented and highly improbable combination of events which have resulted in power cuts during the last few weeks are highly unlikely to occur again, the GEA, on instructions of the Government has arranged to bring in still more generating capacity at very considerable cost to provide an even greater buffer in the event of future breakdown of engines, however unlikely it may be that the present coincidence of events will occur again.

Both OESCO and the MOD are working hard on their engines to restore normality and we remain hopeful that there will result a marked improvement during this weekend when it is expected that some of these engines will be brought back into operation. During the intervening period, GEA will be publishing, on a day to day basis, a schedule of areas programmed for disconnection and will additionally be providing information of the approximate scheduled time and duration of such disconnections. This should permit those that will regrettably be affected to pre-plan and to make alternative arrangements. The schedule for this evening, if considered necessary, is the following, in the order that they appear below:

Bedlam Court	District 15
Cornwall's Lane	District 3
Alameda/Commonwealth	District 5
Rosia Bay	District 20
Waterport Place	District 23
Waterport Terraces	District 24
Governor's Parade	District 7
Western Arm	District 11
King's Bastion	District 1

Minister for Utilities Joe Holliday said: "Both the GEA and the Government agree that power cuts are unacceptable and, despite the extreme and unprecedented coincidence of events that have coincided to cause them, apologise for the fact that they are occurring and for the substantial inconvenience to residential and business consumers. They are not, however the result of any failure in planning or investment by the GEA or the Government. Government is taking extraordinary steps to protect against power cuts in the period from now until the new power station is ready."