

RELATED TERMS

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LESSON LEARNED

Continuity of Operations: Coordinating Backup Power and Fuel Supply

SUMMARY

A sustained public infrastructure disruption such as a power outage will necessitate adequate supplies of generators and backup fuel to maintain critical services. A well-managed backup power and fuel plan should ensure that critical public operations such as fire and health services continue to function in the event of power loss.

DESCRIPTION

During the August 2003 power outage affecting the Eastern United States and Canada, many government offices in New York City did not have sufficient backup power in place to ensure continuity of essential services. According to the New York City Emergency Response Task Force, the Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene, Sanitation, and Transportation as well as many fire-houses and hospitals experienced shortages or other problems.

In its report to the mayor, the Task Force noted that the ensuing requests for additional fuel or generators led to confusion and, in some cases, counterproductive deliveries. Much effort was expended on the part of the City securing and delivering fuel supplies to agencies that should have had an adequate supply.

The Task Force recommended that the City conduct a survey of backup power and develop a backup power installation plan. Specifically, it endorsed an agency-wide evaluation and survey of both backup power capacity and needs. According to the report, "the focus of this effort should be on identifying gaps in emergency power generation for critical government functions that must continue to be performed during an emergency."

Furthermore, the Task Force recommended that the City identify and prioritize the most critical users of backup fuel and ensure its ability to increase supply and deliveries in an emergency.

CITATION

New York City Emergency Response Task Force. *Enhancing New York City's Emergency Preparedness*. October 28, 2003.

(http://www.nyc.gov/html/om/pdf/em_task_force_final_10_28_03.pdf)

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