



Back-Up Power Guide

This guide provides instructions and recommendations for setting up and using backup power sources. Helping you minimise disruptions and protect critical operations.

What is a Backup Power Source?

A backup power source refers to an alternative energy supply that comes into play when the primary electrical grid experiences disruptions or failures. It ensures that critical devices, equipment, and systems continue to receive power even during instances of power outages or load shedding. Backup power sources can include uninterruptible power supplies (UPS), backup generators, and other systems designed to provide electricity when the main power source is compromised.

Why is a Backup Power Source Important?

As we know, load shedding poses a significant challenge for SMEs. During load shedding, businesses may experience sudden power cuts that disrupt operations, hamper productivity, and even lead to data loss. In this context, a backup power source becomes invaluable for SMEs. It ensures that essential operations can continue despite load shedding, allowing businesses to maintain customer service, keep critical systems operational, and prevent potential financial losses due to downtime. With a reliable backup power source in place, SMEs can navigate the uncertainties of load shedding with greater confidence, sustaining their operations, customer trust, and overall business resilience.

Here's a comprehensive backup power guide for small businesses in South Africa facing load shedding, along with a checklist for selecting the right power source:

Backup Power Guide for Small Businesses Facing Load Shedding

Step 1: Assess Power Needs

Determine your power requirements by calculating the wattage of essential devices (computers, servers, lights, etc.). This will help you choose an appropriate backup power solution.

Step 2: Understand Backup Power Options

Explore various backup power options suitable for your business:

- **Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS):** Provides short-term power during load shedding to allow for a graceful shutdown of devices. Useful for small power outages.
- **Backup Generators:** Offers extended power during load shedding. Comes in various sizes and fuel types (diesel, petrol, natural gas) to match your business's needs.

We've created more in-depth resources to help guide you here. ([Link to other blog posts](#))

Step 3: Select the Right Backup Power Source

Use the following checklist to help you choose the right backup power source.

Check off once you have considered these variables.

Power Capacity: Does the backup power source provide enough wattage to support essential devices during load shedding?

Duration: How long can the backup power source sustain your business operations? Choose a duration that aligns with your load shedding schedules.

Fuel Type (For Generators): What type of fuel is readily available in your area? Consider the cost, availability, and environmental impact of the chosen fuel.

Size and Portability: Is the backup power source compact and easy to move if needed? Consider your office space and mobility requirements.

Ease of Installation: How complex is the setup process? Choose a solution that can be installed quickly and efficiently.

Noise Levels (For Generators): Does the generator produce noise that might disrupt your workspace or surroundings? Choose a quieter model if noise is a concern.

Maintenance Requirements: What are the maintenance needs of the backup power source? Regular maintenance ensures reliability.

Automation and Remote Monitoring: Does the backup power source offer features like automatic startup during power loss and remote monitoring? These features enhance convenience.

Scalability: Can the backup power solution be easily expanded to accommodate future power needs?

Step 4: Install and Test

After selecting the backup power source, install it according to the manufacturer's guidelines. Test the system to ensure it works seamlessly during load shedding.

Step 5: Develop Usage Guidelines

Create guidelines for your employees to follow during load shedding. Determine which devices are essential and should be powered during backup power operation.

Step 6: Regular Maintenance

Schedule regular maintenance for your backup power source to ensure it remains reliable. Clean filters, replace worn parts, and perform necessary inspections.

Step 7: Communication Plan

Inform your employees and customers about the backup power system, its capabilities, and its purpose. This ensures everyone knows how to respond during load shedding.

By following these steps and using the checklist to choose the right backup power source, your small business in South Africa can effectively mitigate the challenges posed by load shedding and maintain operational continuity.