



## **POTENTIAL POWER SHORTAGES ACROSS MICHIGAN**

*Brownouts possible this summer.*

Portland, Michigan - The Mid-Continent Independent System Operator ([MISO](#)) is the organization which oversees the power grid for all or a portion of [15 states](#), including Michigan. In late April, MISO warned of the possibility of power shortages this summer during times of peak demand. According to Executive Director Zak Joundi, MISO's northern and central region are at heightened risk for controlled "load sheds". Load-shedding is the deliberate shutdown of electric power in a part or parts of a power-distribution system, generally to prevent the failure of the entire system when the demand strains the capacity of the system.

Two predominant factors are driving power shortages. First, there has been an increase in energy usage as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic ease. Second, as MISO's January 2022 [report](#) found, "...many thermal resources have recently retired from service due to economic, regulatory, and environmental pressures, and the aging thermal assets that remain in service may be more prone to unplanned outages and face supply chain issues."

In times of extreme demand, MISO may direct the City's Board of Light and Power (BLP) to activate emergency plans, known as load-shedding referenced above. As always and as a matter of regular practice, the City's Board of Light and Power (BLP) is preparing and planning for the possibility of power shortages over the summer. We are a locally owned, community-run public power utility, and anything that affects our neighbors affects all of us. If the power grid is nearing capacity, BLP's first action will be requesting help from our electric customers, who can assist by beginning conservation measures such as turning off unneeded lights and electronics or limiting the use of air conditioning. These simple steps and overall conservation practices can make a world of difference.

The City of Portland and the BLP are further working to ensure critical services are uninterrupted during temporary or sustained power outages. Critical care customers who depend on electricity for oxygen or other life-sustaining medical equipment should contact the BLP if they have not already done so.

**Contact:**

**Electric Superintendent, Todd Davlin**

**Phone – (517) 647-6912**

**Email – [electricssuper@portland-michigan.org](mailto:electricssuper@portland-michigan.org)**



**Q. Will we see power outages/brownouts this summer?**

- At this time, we do not know. We are simply making you aware that it is a possibility.
- Grid operators have warned that power shortages exist in our region. As we approach the hot summer months there may be times when the supply of available electricity is not enough to meet customer demand.
- During times of extreme demand, when there is not enough generation to meet customer demand for power, power demand must be lowered to avoid uncontrolled blackouts.

**Q. What caused this problem? Why can't you fix it?**

- Unfortunately, this is a complex problem that can't be fixed by any one electric utility.
- There are two main reasons that our part of the country is facing potential power shortages. First, there has been an increase in energy usage as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic ease. Second, a significant amount of generation has been retired from service and existing resources face supply chain issues.
- Together, these tight grid conditions impact all electric utilities—big or small—not just BLP. Consumers Energy, DTE, and other electric utilities in Michigan are also preparing for potential power shortages.

**Q. What is BLP doing to prepare for this?**

- BLP staff are actively planning and preparing for the possibility of power shortages. As much as it is within our control, we hope to minimize any disruption to our valued customers.
- We are sharing this information now because we are committed to transparency and want to keep you informed.

**Q. Doesn't the BLP have generators that provide power to the City in these situations?**

- Yes, the BLP has diesel and natural gas-powered generators that are capable of generating approximately 40% of our load during peak demand on hot summer days as directed by MISO. However, as a matter of order of operations, we would first operate our generators as directed by MISO prior to initiating a load shedding event.

**Q. Will we be notified before any outages/brownouts?**

- If we are ordered to shed load, our first action will be requesting help from you, our customers, who can assist us by beginning conservation measures such as turning off unneeded lights and electronics or limiting the use of air conditioning.
- As a last resort, we may have to cut power to customers to reduce demand for electricity on the grid. If we are forced to do this we will make every possible effort to notify our customers before we implement controlled power outages.

**Q. How can I learn more about this?**

- We will continue to share updates on our website and through social media. We encourage you to frequently visit our website—[www.portland-michigan.org](http://www.portland-michigan.org)—and follow the City of Portland on Facebook.