

Johannesburg City Power pleads with residents not to panic

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Johannesburg - City Power said it is pleading with residents in its area of supply not to panic when they experience recurrent disconnections.

"City Power has started to roll out a solution called load limiting in its areas of supply in Johannesburg and households have been advised to reduce their consumption by switching off non-essential items such as geysers, stoves and pool pumps when they experience disconnections to ensure a steady supply," City Power said in a statement issued on Sunday.

Load Limiting is a technology that enables City Power to accurately identify and ascertain household consumption in real time in relation to the available generating capacity.

The deployment of load limiting will enable City Power to remotely disconnect households that don't comply with requests to reduce consumption, remotely using smart meters.

Households that have an excessive consumption would experience repetitive disconnections at five minute intervals for a period of 30 seconds until they have reduced their consumption to required levels.

Should they fail to abide by instructions to reduce consumption, non-compliant residents will be disconnected remotely via smart meters.

"If your electricity is disconnecting for a period of 30 seconds, you would need to comply by immediately switching off your heavy current appliances," cautioned City Power.

When each household reduces consumption to required levels during periods of constrained supply, it will spare the affected areas from being subjected to load shedding. This is because pressure on the grid will be lessened when the entire neighbourhood collectively reduces consumption during peak hours to the required threshold.

Smart meters installed

By the end of next week, City Power plans to have uploaded approximately 30 000 smart meters with load limiting capabilities. The total number of smart meters installed is currently over 92 000.

"City Power has embarked on a mass deployment of load limiting to leverage the power of technology to avert the implementation of the early stages of load shedding," it said.

City Power said it has successfully piloted the system in Aspen Hills in the south of Johannesburg. Approximately 9 000 smart meters have been uploaded with load limiting capabilities when the rollout commenced.

The smart meters that have been uploaded with load limiting technology will be curtailed from an average household consumption of 42Amps to 21Amps. This will allow affected households to still run light power consuming appliances and applications such as lights, televisions and alarm systems.

However, when the load limiting is effected, energy intensive appliances such as geysers, stoves and pool pumps cannot be operated.

Sicelo Xulu, managing director of City Power, explained that load limiting will slash average household consumption by half, thus reducing pressure on the grid and ensuring security of supply.

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"In the first two weeks, household usage will be limited to 21Amps between 19:00 and 22:00 during peak hours when the grid is generally under severe constraint. After this period, load limiting will run concurrently with the load shedding schedule, which will be published on the City Power website," said Xulu.

City Power said it envisages that all smart meters in the City of Johannesburg will have load limiting capabilities by the end of August.

Residents are warned that there might be planned outages during the rollout phase, however, City Power undertook to keep the duration of these disconnections to a minimum to minimise inconvenience.

"We are pleased to be embarking on this exciting leg in our network rollout and we are confident that the residents of Johannesburg will reap immense benefits from the deployment of smart technology," said Xulu.

"We plead with the ratepayers to bear with us during this time, and we apologise profusely for any inconvenience caused. The rollout of load limiting is just one of the ways in which City Power is helping the City of Johannesburg to achieve its vision of being a world class African city."

Contact the smart meter call centre on 087 022 0540 or visit City Power's website.

Fin24

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