



WATTS NEW BUSINESS e-NEWSLETTER



Hurricane Elsa: recovering, learning and striving for better

The July 2nd storm dealt a harsh blow to Barbados, the first storm to have such an impact in over 60 years. Like many of you, we began the long process of restoration as soon as the all-clear was given, and we didn't stop until the job was done. We're pleased to say that service was safely restored to all customers impacted by Hurricane Elsa over the ensuing three weeks thanks to our dedicated crews and contractors, and to the thousands of customers who provided timely and accurate outage reporting.

Each hurricane season, the Light & Power team readies itself for weather systems that could impact our infrastructure and service to customers, and this storm season is no different. But because we're committed to continuous improvement, we captured learnings as we progressed through post-Elsa

restoration that we'll be putting into practice to further improve our response, including:

- Accelerating our pole replacement program to withstand Category 3 and higher winds.
- Accelerating our plans to enclose the Hampton Substation, the only Substation impacted by Elsa and the only one not yet enclosed.
- Strengthening customer awareness around tree management, providing more robust education on responsible and safe trimming to minimize tree impacts on electricity service.

Thanks to all of you for your outage reporting, your trust and your patience as we progressed to full and safe restoration.

Electricity vs. Hurricanes: a conversation with the DEM

Light & Power is always pleased for a chance to partner with the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) to help Barbadians understand more about their electricity provider, particularly following a challenging period such as we experienced with Hurricane Elsa.

Recently, Light & Power's Engineering Manager Neka Archer was a guest on 'Real Talk in the Face of Danger' for a post-hurricane chat. The

podcast was sponsored by the DEM and hosted by CBC's Diane Forte.

Key among the topics discussed were reliability of Light & Power's system, the most significant challenges we faced as we worked to restore service, steps Light & Power has taken to minimize duration of outages in the event of future storms, and what customers can do to help keep the lights on in preparation for storm impacts.

We were grateful to share our perspectives with Ms. Forte, and for her generous acknowledgement of our team's efforts in the weeks following Hurricane Elsa.

Click [here](#) to listen to the 9-minute segment.



Safety: it's everything

As Manager Health, Safety and Environment, Nirvana Roopchan is a leading voice in our commitment to safety as our first priority. In this issue of Watts New Business, Nirvana talks about safety at Light & Power and what it takes to ensure truly safe operations.



Every single day we strive for an injury-free workplace, one in which we share a belief that all injuries are preventable. Reflecting on July's post-Elsa restoration

efforts, the complex work entailed a series of high-risk tasks and activities that had to be carefully planned, assessed and supervised. One error can result in serious injury or fatality but, with the commitment of our employees, we succeeded in working injury-free throughout the effort.

What does it take to plan and execute work safely – not only following a damaging storm but every day? Here are the four pillars which form the foundation of our safe work approach:

1. Plan and prepare. Carefully and consistently plan and communicate ahead of jobs, and complete and share all required job scopes, permits, risk assessments and job hazard analyses.

2. Procedures. Establish, implement, communicate and follow operational procedures and safe work practices - every job, every day.

3. Proactive. Constantly scan for risks, step back when conditions change and reconsider, and report events or situations that have the potential to cause an incident.

4. Pause and make it personal. Empower employees to take personal responsibility and ownership for safety. This means the right – indeed, the responsibility – to stop work and speak up when unsafe conditions are identified.

Safety is everyone's responsibility and, at Light & Power, we remain committed to safe and reliable service operations.

Undergrounding: one of the ways we deliver safe, reliable energy

Particularly after a storm such as Hurricane Elsa, talk of undergrounding the country's energy transmission network arises. Truthfully, at Light & Power, undergrounding is never off the table. We already have underground networks in place for critical national infrastructure and services such as Belle Pumping Station, Q.E.H., the airport and seaport, greater Bridgetown and government headquarters. And our transmission network between substations to critical infrastructure is also underground.

In fact, we're currently doing more undergrounding. With the Government of Barbados' ongoing roadworks along part of Highway 1, we are using the opportunity for undergrounding along that stretch.

But undergrounding is expensive, complex and it isn't a cure-all. While underground transmission lines and infrastructure would be protected from hurricane-force winds, they would be vulnerable to earthquakes or flooding. The cost to transition from overhead to a fully underground network would be in excess of BDS \$2 billion. In keeping with a cost of service business, Light & Power would work with the FTC to recoup that \$2 billion investment through rates, resulting in an increase in electricity costs for customers. Then, there would be further cost to the individual customer who would be responsible for the ducts, cables and modifications required for service connectivity to their premises.

There are times when undergrounding makes good sense such as when major roadwork is underway and we can take advantage of existing trenching to bury the lines, and to support critical services such as healthcare where reliability of electricity service, particularly during emergency situations like hurricanes, is essential to the well-being of Barbadians. At Light & Power we've always balanced the cost of electricity with the need for reliable, safe service and we'll maintain that balance as we move forward in the best interests of customers, today and in the future.

Giving back: DEOs benefit from Light & Power's support

As committed community members, the Light & Power team knows that it's through working together that we achieve results. And it's in that spirit that we collaborated with the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) to support safer, stronger communication tools for use during times of challenge.

We were pleased to donate 90 HAM radios to the DEM and the District Emergency Organisations (DEOs) for their use during emergencies to facilitate communication from the field to the National Emergency Operations Centre.

Communication is critical during such times and having the right tools can make all the difference. In thanking Light & Power for the donation, valued at \$16,500, DEM Director Kerry Hinds noted that both citizens and corporations had a role to play in helping the nation be better prepared. "We should never lose sight that disaster management and preparing for and responding to adversity are oftentimes a shared responsibility requiring input from a myriad of individuals and organisations collaborating for the greater good, and giving selflessly to this particular pursuit of national resilience. It cannot be underscored enough that we all have an invaluable contribution to make in preparing for and safeguarding ourselves, and in building resilience," Ms. Hinds said.

"Communication is key to the work of the DEM, the DEO and for us at Light & Power," commented Light & Power's MD Roger Blackman at the August 22 handover event. "People depend on information to keep themselves and their families safe. With this donation to the DEOs today, those on the ground in districts across Barbados can communicate with the National Emergency Operations Centre and share critical information back to neighbours in their area."



Options for business in an ongoing COVID environment

Recently, small business enterprises reached out to Light & Power for guidance in managing electricity bills during this difficult economic period. If you're a business owner considering a temporary closure of your operations in this ongoing COVID environment, we offer a temporary disconnection of electricity supply for up to six months without requiring a new GEED certificate to reconnect.

As long as you've been in business for a minimum of one year, this option may be available to you – and minimum payments will not be required during the disconnection period. Contact our team at 626-9000 to learn more.



We're still a long way from November

The 2021 Hurricane Season is showing no signs of slowing, with atmospheric and oceanic conditions remaining favourable at this point in the season for above-average storm activity. All the more reason for comprehensive preparation and readiness – for us and each of you.

For Light & Power, that means ensuring adequate inventories for reparations, a tuned up and ready fleet, engaged and alert response teams, and close weather monitoring, among other efforts. As Hurricane Elsa restoration showed, it's 'all hands on deck' to ensure safe, reliable service is restored whenever storm impacts affect our customers.

We encourage you – responsible business owners, all – to ensure your readiness, too.



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