

The US Power Grid Under Attack – The North Carolina Power Substations Incident

By now, some of you may have read the news or seen the TV reports regarding the North Carolina power substation attacks. Tens of thousands of people were left without power following the incident. And not only homes went dark, but schools were closed as well, and a curfew was imposed following this act of vandalism.

What's really going on, and why isn't this criminal act getting more coverage?

Is this an isolated incident, or is this a new threat we should all be aware of and prepare for?

Let's look at the facts and figure out what we can do when something similar occurs in our neighborhood.

What Happened?

On Saturday evening, it was reported that gunfire damaged two electrical substations in Moore County, North Carolina. As a result, 100,000 residents were left without electricity, and authorities have announced a mandatory curfew.

It was established the outage began after 7 p.m. Saturday night in an area near Carthage, North Carolina, and soon after, it spread, affecting the majority of the county.

There were two separate attacks, and the scene was the same at both sites. In addition, the local authorities have found evidence that indicates the person or persons who attacked the electrical substations knew exactly what they were doing. The damage was caused by intentional gunfire, but the authorities

have not yet released any other information since the investigation is far from being over.

At a Monday press conference, Gov. Roy Cooper said that this was an intentional criminal act and that “federal, state, and local law enforcement are actively working to bring those responsible to justice.” The local authorities, with the assistance of the FBI, are currently investigating the incident, and even though the intentional destruction of utility infrastructure is a serious crime, they are currently not classifying it as “domestic terrorism.”

The damage is estimated to be in the millions of dollars, but the impact on the community cannot be quantified. This selfish and cruel act left many people hurting, and those with health issues were the most affected. Such an incident can have a critical outcome for people needing medical assistance, as reported in Moore County.

In fact, authorities have urged people with medical needs and everyone dependent on electricity to seek shelter at facilities equipped with power generators. They advised even leaving the county until power can be restored.

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Who is responsible?

This is currently the million-dollar question, and it seems that theories are running wild on the internet and social media. While any information about who carried it out is still to be provided, according to various sources, there was more than one person involved, and the attacks were coordinated.

One theory spreading is that foreign agents from the Russian Federation are responsible for the attack as a test to establish the vulnerability of the United States power grid. It was reported in the past that our outdated power grid and our dependence on other countries (like China) for electrical systems parts make us vulnerable. So you can imagine that a large-scale coordinated attack on our power grid, similar to the one in North Carolina, will endanger millions of Americans.

However, another theory that is getting a lot of traction is the one involving a drag show. According to various sources, the attacks were meant to cause an intentional outage to shut down the "Downtown Divas" drag performance in Southern Pines.

The organizers said that they had been the target of protests and harassment for weeks. Far-right activists came to protest the event, and it is believed they are responsible for the attack. The police have yet to find a connection between the drag show and the attacks on the substations.

When will power be restored?

Tuesday, a spokesperson for Duke Energy said at a news conference that power would be restored by late Wednesday. However, the spokesperson said, "That will not happen all at once," and customers will get their power back on a few thousand at a time.

The power will be restored gradually since the new equipment which was installed following the attack needs to be calibrated and tested. It needs to work in sync with the grid to prevent any issues from prolonging the power outage.

Since there is no guarantee that all customers will have their lights back on by the end of the week, authorities recommend looking for help from neighbors and relatives or relocating to facilities that have their power restored or use electrical

generators.

Is there a precedent, or is this an isolated incident?

While theories spread after the incident, the facts still remain the same. We have an old and vulnerable power grid, and there's really no telling how and when it will lead to our demise. Even scarier is the fact that this incident is not isolated, and people fail to see a pattern developing inside our borders.

On April 16, 2013, in Coyote, California, a similar attack was carried out on the PG&E Metcalf substation. During the attack, several gunmen opened fire on 17 electrical transformers. Even if the attack had little impact on the power supplies and customers were not affected, it was reported that more than 15 million worth of equipment was damaged.

These kinds of attacks are raising a new level of threat, and many Americans are unaware of the vulnerabilities of our power grid since the media doesn't provide enough coverage. Whether it is a natural event like the temperature drop that crippled the Texas power grid or a man-made act like the ones in California and North Carolina, one thing is certain; we should not be completely dependent on the power grid.

If we think about it, this new threat is something we should all consider, regardless of whether we are preppers. The power grid can be crippled by a rather simplistic action, like gunfire, and that's one scary fact. Almost anyone has access to firearms in our country; unfortunately, not all those who do are "responsible" gun owners.

And to top it all, the national power grid can be exposed to more complex attacks, like detonating electromagnetic pulse (EMP) devices, and we won't even know about it until the

lights turn off. There are EMP generators that fit inside a suitcase, and if these get into the wrong hands, millions of Americans will be in danger once used.

What can we do to protect our homes?

We've all seen how people react during a crisis. For example, when a hurricane warning is issued, folks rush to the hardware stores to buy any type of generator they can get their hands on, but this is only one small step we can take. In fact, most people are reactive rather than proactive, and this shows every time a natural or man-made disaster occurs.

I've said it before, and I will say it again, "You don't need to be a prepper to be able and protect your home and your family!". It all comes down to common sense, and people should learn to read the signs and become proactive. Rather than blaming it on others, we should all become proactive and responsible for our future since there will be times when help won't come.

You should indeed get a generator and stockpile all the batteries you think will be needed, but you should also understand that this may not be enough. Assume it will get worse before it gets better because no one will be able to guarantee your safety.

Ideally, you should be able to produce your own electricity and store it. This is critical preparation for people who are dependent on electricity, like people with medical issues or those with mobility problems.

I won't go into the details on how you should cover your power needs and what you need to do to make sure the lights stay on forever. We've covered this topic on Survivopedia before, and there are various options available to harvest renewable

energy and all sorts of DYI projects you can rely on if you work with a limited budget.

The thing I want to stress the most is that during a power outage, people with medical issues will become the most vulnerable, requiring special preparations. If they live alone, they will not be able to call for help if their condition deteriorates. If they use mobility aids, an unexpected power outage can cause various problems, and the risk of injury increases with every passing hour.

In some cases, you will need to get to them as fast as possible, and this may become a problem when a curfew is imposed. To provide them with the best care, you should delegate someone to transfer them to facilities that operate with the help of power generators. Moving them in with friends and relatives in another county would be even better until things return to normal since it will make the situation more bearable for them.

Having medicine stockpiled and other items that make life easier for those with health issues is critical. Sometimes even a simple thing like a hot meal or comfort snack can make all the difference and improve the morale of those suffering. Ask someone to look out for seniors and those in need and provide basic care if needed.

Concluding

These recent attacks show us, once again, how vulnerable our power grid is and how little prepared we are to handle such scenarios. The authorities are somehow helpless when it comes to handling and managing the aftermath of these events. Even if they manage to catch the culprits and bring them to justice, that still won't bring the power back to families for days or weeks to come. In the end, we are the ones responsible for our future, and we need to be prepared for whatever it may throw at us.



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