

How to prevent load-shedding from frying your smartphone and PC

Jamie McKane 14 February 2019 40 Comments



The [misery of load-shedding has returned](#) to South Africa, leaving citizens without electricity for hours on an almost daily basis.

According to Eskom, the recent bout of load-shedding is due to a shortage in capacity exacerbated by the “loss” of multiple generating units.

Additionally, the need for Eskom to replenish emergency water and diesel reserves has resulted in the need to implement load-shedding, as the loss of these reserves could have dire consequences for South Africa.

Hardware dangers

While the regular loss of power is a frustrating interruption for South Africans, it can also have a detrimental effect on electronic devices.

Power cuts cause electrical surges which could potentially damage devices you have connected to plugs at home or work.

A severe power surge can damage any electronic device connected to a power outlet, although these are thankfully not common.

However, the practice of load-shedding increases the risk of power surges, especially when the power is turned back on.

These surges could potentially fry everything from your TV or monitor to your smartphone if they are strong enough, and desktop computers are especially vulnerable to these surges.

Many [local users have reported](#) motherboards, power supplies, and other desktop components dying due to power surges during load-shedding.

Smartphones can also be vulnerable, although modern devices have advanced charging circuits which should protect them.

Network equipment such as routers and modems are also vulnerable to power surges, and are a common casualty when they take place.

Protecting your electronics

To be safe, the best thing to do once the power has gone off is to turn off all devices and plugs to which expensive hardware such as desktop PCs and TVs are connected.

This will prevent your electronics from being destroyed if there is a major power surge when the electricity is turned back on.

You should also acquaint yourself with your load-shedding schedule and ensure that important devices are not running or plugged in to an outlet when the power cuts out – especially your desktop PC.

When it comes to smartphones, it is a good idea to charge your smartphone from a power bank during load-shedding switches, eliminating potential exposure to a damaging surge.

Unexpected shutdowns thanks to power loss can also cause hardware failures or data corruption.

To protect your important hardware from unexpected shutdowns, you can purchase a UPS for your main house circuits.

This will allow you to protect the plugs your PCs, TVs, and other smart devices are connected to.

If this option is too expensive, you should at least buy surge-protected adapters to keep important hardware safe. Many multi-plugs and extension cords have built-in surge protection.

Eskom also [recommends](#) that users prepare for load-shedding by keeping their cellphone fully charged and backing up their data to the cloud.