Simply put, a power interruption is the loss of electricity service. Such interruptions can be very brief (less than 1/100th of a second) or varying lengths of time (minutes, hours) depending on the contributing factors. Most power interruptions are unplanned and so brief you may not notice anything more than a flicker of a light.

Interruptions that are the result of problems experienced on the electricity system can be caused by a variety of situations, the most common are: weather; trees contacting power lines; vehicle accidents; vandalism; equipment failure; and, even birds and other animals.

Most interruptions that occur at commercial locations usually originate from within the business’s electricity system itself. Brief interruptions, such as a momentary dimming of lights, may result from the operation (cutting-in and cutting-out) of larger appliances and machinery, such as freezers, pumps, furnaces, ventilation systems, production equipment, etc. Longer interruptions can originate when equipment fails or malfunctions. If this happens, your protective equipment (fuses and/or breakers) should automatically shut off your power supply.

If you experience more than a “momentary” disturbance, this often indicates a more serious issue that may need to be investigated by Newfoundland Power and/or an electrician or electrical contractor.

Proper grounding of your electricity system is very important. It helps to ensure the operation of large appliances and equipment won’t result in momentary power disturbances or more lengthy power outages.
**BUILT-IN PROTECTION**

When shopping for electronic appliances and equipment make sure you know the limitations. Look for equipment with a battery back-up system that will remember program settings when power is lost briefly. Also, look for appliances and equipment that have protective devices built right in to the unit to prevent damage during power interruptions. To ensure you are getting the protection you need, do some research on the product you are about to purchase before going to the store; consumerreports.org and similar organizations are great resources for finding out this sort of information. NOTE: Customers with three-phase power are required to have phase protection. Newfoundland Power is not responsible for loss of equipment due to the loss of one or more phases.

**SURGE PROTECTORS**

Surge protectors can protect your equipment against some power interruptions. Don’t confuse these with power bars that are simply extension cords with a circuit breaker, as these offer no protection from loss of power.

The cost to purchase a surge protector depends on the level of protection desired and the electrical load of the equipment you need to protect. Surge protectors will mainly protect against over-voltage disturbances caused by the operation of motor driven appliances and equipment, up to the design limits of the protective device. Under voltage fluctuations can cause appliance or equipment damage even if a surge protector is in use. When choosing surge protection, ensure that the product is CSA approved for the level of protection desired. If you are unsure, ask a sales representative for help.

**POWER CONDITIONERS AND UPS**

A power conditioner is an electrical device that provides “clean” AC power to sensitive electrical equipment. A typical power conditioner for your home or office has up to ten or more receptacles or outlets and commonly provides surge protection as well as noise filtering. Many models also provide cable and phone line conditioning.

An uninterruptible power supply (UPS) is the most complete form of protection, as it enables your equipment to operate on battery supplied power if an interruption occurs.

Power conditioners and UPS devices can cost anywhere from a few hundred dollars to thousands of dollars. They are mainly used by businesses to protect critical loads. When buying a power conditioner or UPS, inquire about built-in power interruption protection and make sure you consult a professional when installing any of these solutions.

**WHENEVER. WHEREVER. WE’LL BE THERE**

At Newfoundland Power, we are committed to providing our customers with safe and reliable power. Unfortunately power interruptions do sometimes happen. When they do, our employees are committed to restoring power quickly and safely, 24 hours a day, in all kinds of weather.