



# THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS NEWS RELEASE

(340) 774-3552 • [communications@viwapa.vi](mailto:communications@viwapa.vi) / [www.viwapa.vi](http://www.viwapa.vi)

## WAPA: Explanation of Recent Outages on St. Thomas and St. John and Efforts Towards Improvement



*Image: Randolph Harley Power Plant on St. Thomas*

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS - July 15, 2024 – The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (“WAPA” or the “Authority”) would like to provide an update regarding the recent rotational scheduled outages that have impacted the St. Thomas/St. John district. These outages were primarily caused by essential repairs and unexpected incidents affecting our generation capacity at the Randolph Harley Power Plant (“RHPP”).

Scheduled repairs on Unit 23 significantly reduced our generation capacity due to multiple fractures, cracks, and damage observed on the fuel system which onset the cause of the scheduled outages on Monday. The fuel system required complete isolation, drainage, and safety assessments before any repair work could begin, which extended the duration of the outage. Additionally, an unexpected tripping of Unit 27 caused a temporary outage on Tuesday late afternoon, that lasted approximately two hours. WAPA Plant Personnel responded promptly, working diligently to restore power as quickly as possible to increase the generation capacity at the plant to serve more customers.

External events such as vehicle collisions with poles, wildlife interference, and other unforeseen incidents can also trigger outages. While these events are beyond our control, they can cause significant disruptions to our power supply outside of a scheduled outage. Following a district-wide outage, our standard protocol involves disconnecting the plant from the grid to ensure all transmission and distribution feeders are open and isolated for safe and effective repairs.

Our dedicated team, led by Mr. Gabriel Dore, Maintenance Manager, and Mr. Colville White, Acting Operations Manager, has worked tirelessly during these outages. Their efforts included isolating and

draining the fuel system to address damages, implementing a shift schedule to ensure continuous 24-hour maintenance operations, and utilizing preventative maintenance measures to track operating hours and maintain equipment safety and efficiency.

With the completion of the necessary repairs, the RHPP is now being returned to its most efficient operational state. Standby generation deployed to cover the generation shortfall will be gradually shut down and returned to standby mode.

The Authority understands that these outages have impacted everyone, including our customers, our employees, and their families, who are all part of our community. We appreciate the patience and understanding of the community as we continue to work towards providing a reliable and efficient power supply.

To stay updated on scheduled and unscheduled outages, sign up for WAPA Alerts [here](#). To learn more from Interim Plant Superintendent, Kevin Harrigan, on efforts during the outages last week, please visit WAPA's YouTube page at: [https://youtu.be/Vrrx3V\\_TiFo](https://youtu.be/Vrrx3V_TiFo).

*The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority Communication's department is committed to reaching, informing, and connecting with the youngest members of the community to the eldest, through meaningful, transparent and effective communication.*

###

**About WAPA:** The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority is an autonomous agency of the Virgin Islands Government which produces and distributes electricity and drinking water to residential and commercial customers in the territory. WAPA was created by the Fifth Legislature of the Virgin Islands in 1964 through Act No. 1248. Today, WAPA generates electrical power at production plants on St. Thomas and St. Croix and distributes electrical service through smart grids to customers on St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. John, Hassel Island, and Water Island. Potable water is distributed to almost 13,000 customers through water lines and standpipes. WAPA also has the responsibility of installing and maintaining streetlights.

(340) 774-3552 (STT/STJ) • (340) 773-2250 (STX) |  Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority |  @VIWAPA