



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WATER & POWER AUTHORITY
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
NEWS RELEASE

Jean P. Greaux, Jr.
Director of Corporate Communications
(340) 774-3552 ext. 2147 or (340) 244-7330
communications@viwapa.vi / www.viwapa.vi

September 22, 2021

TUESDAY NIGHT POLE FIRE IN SUGAR ESTATE DAMAGED ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT AND RESULTED IN POWER OUTAGE TO PORTIONS OF ST. THOMAS AND ST. JOHN

SOME CUSTOMERS EXPERIENCED LENGTHY SERVICE INTERRUPTION WHILE CREWS REPLACED BURNED POLE AND RESTORED ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

Electrical service was restored to all customers in the St. Thomas - St. John district shortly after 4 a.m. Wednesday. An extended service interruption for customers on Feeder 8A and on a portion of Feeder 7C resulted from a Tuesday night pole fire which required a burned pole and damaged electrical equipment be replaced. The compromised pole, in Sugar Estate, held both an electrical transmission circuit and equipment associated with Feeder 8A.

The fire, which occurred at approximately 9:30 p.m. Tuesday, sent an apparent electrical fault to the Randolph Harley Power Plant tripping three generating units and affecting service to customers on Feeders 6A, 7A, 7C and 7E. Line Department crews later required service on Feeder 8A be interrupted due to the pole fire.

Plant personnel restarted units and restored service to customers on Feeders 6A, 7A, 7E and on a portion of Feeder 7C (from Tutu to the top of Cassi Hill). The remaining portion of Feeder 7C could not be restored due to voltage limitations on another transmission circuit. Customers on Feeder 8A were expected to remain without service until repair work was completed.

For several hours following the fire, WAPA personnel worked to replace the compromised pole and install electrical equipment required to restore service to Feeder 8A and the transmission circuit. At approximately 3:20 a.m., crews commenced service restoration to the remaining customers and normalized the electric grid. All customers were restored at 4:10 a.m.

Interim Executive Director Noel Hodge apologized for the inconvenience customers experienced because of the pole fire incident. He also thanked the men and women of WAPA who responded to the incident Tuesday night and worked through the wee hours of today to ensure that service was restored as quickly and as safely as possible. Hodge extended his thanks as well to the V.I. Fire Service for their quick response and assistance in safely extinguishing the blaze.

###

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