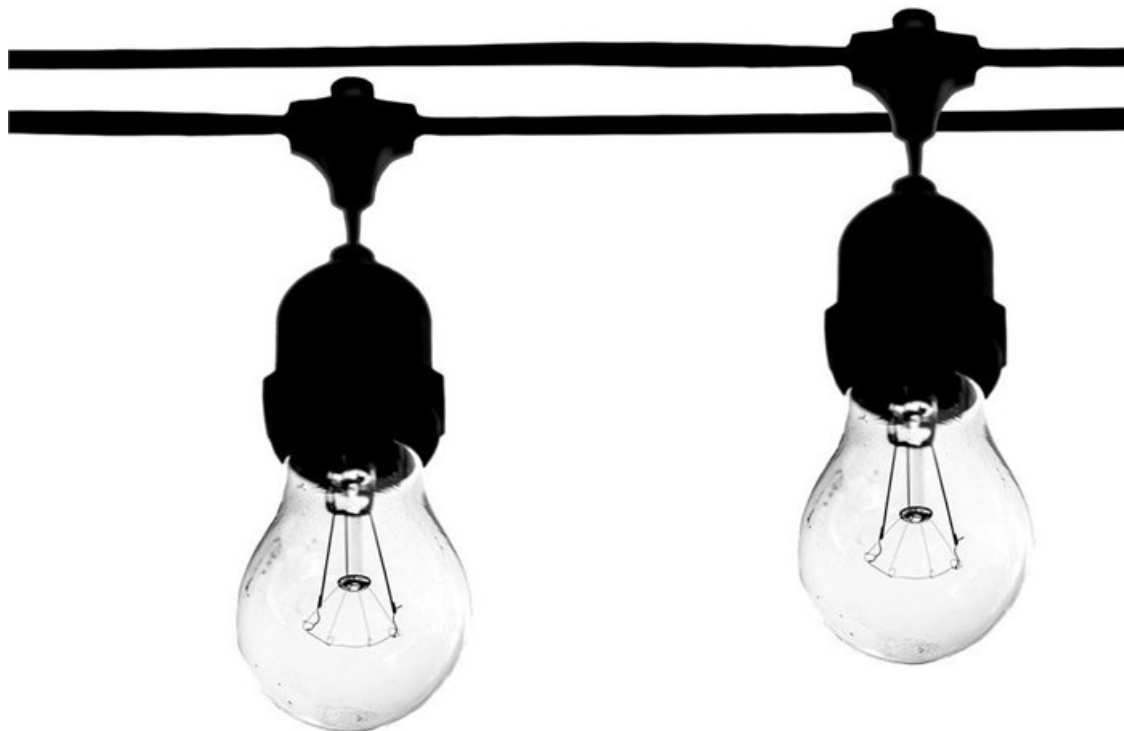


# What can SMEs do when the lights go out?

As rolling power cuts are predicted for the coming weeks, the commercial sector, including many small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) will bear the brunt, as their festive season preparations come to a halt.



Source: [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com)

Small businesses most affected by load shedding include those in manufacturing, retail and hospitality.

“Small businesses are often the hardest hit by load shedding, since they’re less likely to be able to afford the measures needed to cushion them from regular electricity cuts,” says Daniel Goldberg, co-founder of Bridgement, a fintech company offering digital invoice financing and credit facilities to SMEs.

Stage 6 load shedding, which came in effect this week, means SMEs could be affected 18 times for four days for up to four-and-a-half hours at a time, or 18 times over eight days for about two hours at a time.

Goldberg offers some advice to SMEs to manage their businesses during load shedding:

- **Monitor the schedule**

Keep track of when load shedding is likely to happen. Using mobile apps like Eskom se Push, Loadshed, Gridwatch and Loadshedder Alert will help you track power outages in your business’s location as well as send through notifications of when it is scheduled to start and end. Look up the schedules on the websites for the main municipalities across the country or on your provider’s website. Social media, like Twitter can provide you with real-time updates.

- **Charge up**

While the power is on, ensure your devices are fully charged. You’ll still be able to work off your cell phone and laptop during load shedding.

- **Prepare for risks**

The biggest risk for SMEs is power surges and damage to computer infrastructure and manufacturing equipment. Consider surge protection plugs and backup your data if you have electronic equipment. The break in electricity has the potential to damage the hardware of your computers. You can buy surge protection plugs for R100-200 from retailers like Builders Warehouse and Takealot. Ensure that all business information is backed up on a daily basis, to a secure cloud-based server, where possible.

- **Look into alternatives**

A small generator battery/inverter can provide your business with an interim source of power and reduce the impact of disruptions on your workday. Consider also buying an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) to avoid any downtime while switching from grid power to a back-up generator/battery, and vice versa. This will keep equipment running smoothly with zero downtime.

- **Consider flexitime**

An advantage that SMEs have over larger businesses is that they can be a lot more flexible in how they operate. Consider alternative working schedules for your staff that take load shedding hours into account. This allows your staff to complete their work in their own time, when the power allows. Use the time offline to schedule face to face and strategy meetings.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>