

Our Response to Recent Outages.

On Thursday September 10th at roughly 10:30 a contractor hit the 306 feeder which provides power from MP in to our power plant and which, from there, feeds virtually the entire Southside with the exception of Ridgewood. That hit caused the first in a series of power outages. Our response was to transfer load to other feeders which supply power from MP into the City. With the shorted out section of the 306 repaired we believed it was safe to transfer the load back. The second power outage occurred on Sunday morning, September 26th at roughly 7:30 a.m. There was no visible damage to the line and yet the breaker tripped. Again, we transferred load to the other feeders and re-engaged the tripped breaker. Because the breaker held, it was generally believed that the fault had occurred elsewhere on the line and had cleared and that the problem was not at the breaker. Nevertheless, A large power expert was brought in to test the breaker and it tested fine. Again, on Sunday October 10th at roughly 4:30 p.m., the power went out on the same 306 feeder. Again, the load was transferred to other feeders to return power to customers. This time however, the load was not transferred back to the 306 Feeder. Instead it was decided to keep the load on the other feeders for reliability purposes. To add insult to injury, a fuse in the Ridgewood substation, which was carrying a section of the shifted load, blew on Wednesday October 14th at about 4:00.

At this point we are still uncertain as to what exactly has been causing the outages on the 306 feeder since the contractor hit. We will be replacing 200 feet of line next week where the original break occurred. We have had experts testing our equipment on either side of the break and our equipment does not show signs of having been damaged. So the conclusion is that the fault is occurring somewhere on the section of line as it leaves the MP substation on the west side of Highway 53 roughly to the downtown water tower. Our crews are inspecting the line, the insulators, etc.

We are keenly aware of the inconvenience this causes, but, more so, we are aware of how such a series of events erodes our customer's confidence in our ability to provide uninterrupted power. Know that we are diligently working on re-establishing the reliability of the 306 feeder.

Just so you know, when a short happens, current flows through the wire at very high rates which can damage wire a distance away from the where the short occurred. Breakers are safety devices in the power lines which are meant to trip in order to keep excess flow of power from damaging property and endangering lives. The tripped breaker is typically not the problem. It is a symptom.