

National Grid doubles emergency planning exercises amid concerns over energy supplies

National Grid has doubled its emergency planning exercises as concerns over energy shortages this winter grow.

Potential scenarios – including the rationing of electricity – will be wargamed over four days, instead of the usual two, as part of ‘Exercise Degree’.

“The aim of this exercise is to demonstrate that the gas industry is prepared and able to meet its obligations in the event of a Network Gas Supply Emergency (NGSE),” said a briefing document from the National Grid.

It will take place on the 13 and 14 of September, as well as on the 4 and 5 of October.

[Cost of living latest: Energy price cap will rise to £3,554 a year this week](#)

The annual operation, last year given the name ‘Exercise Celcius’, only took place on two days in September 2021.

National Grid said the arrangements for this year’s exercise were made back in January.

More on Cost Of Living



Spike in gas prices threatens big troubles for European economies



Parents using junk food to make up for not being able to afford holidays and days out, research finds



Medical students forced to cut back on food, clothes and heating as cost of living crisis bites

Related Topics:

- [Cost of living](#)
- [Energy Crisis](#)

An industry source told Sky News the doubling of planning days should not cause undue concern to the public, but it has been extended due to the new issues now facing the UK – such as the war with Ukraine affecting global supplies.

“Hopefully this exercise will mean we cover all of these new scenarios, and we will be more prepared going into the winter,” they said.

Advertisement

The gas supplies, they said, are expected to remain stable throughout the winter with household blackouts “very unlikely”.

“The nearest we got to that was during the Beast from East, but even then we had only started discussing with commercial partners the possibility of cutting back.”

A central control room will work through different scenarios the UK may face, to ensure the country is prepared. But any issues that do occur with gas supplies won't happen suddenly, the industry expert said.

“Gas moves at walking speed,” he said.

No need to panic, says Downing Street

A National Grid spokesperson said: “Exercise Degree is the latest in a long series of annual exercises which go back to 1996 when the Network Emergency Co-ordinator role was created.

“The exercises enable National Grid Gas, government, and industry participants to test the effectiveness of industry-wide emergency arrangements in order to prevent, and (if unavoidable) respond to a gas supply emergency.

“The Network Emergency Coordinator has an obligation to provide assurance to the HSE on the effectiveness of these arrangements. The pre-winter exercises take place every year ahead of winter and have become a routine part of the energy industry's annual calendar. The arrangements for Exercise Degree were made back in January 2022.”

Spreaker

Due to your consent preferences, you're not able to view this.

[Open Privacy Options](#)

Subscribe for free to the Daily podcast on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), and [Spreaker](#)

But it comes as Number 10 insists there is no need to panic over energy supplies and said households and businesses will not face blackouts this winter thanks to supplies from Australia.

The Attalos gas tanker is set to arrive at the Isle of Grain terminal in Kent, by the mouth of the Thames, later on Monday – believed to be the first cargo of liquified natural gas (LNG) sent from Australia to Europe in six years.

The squeeze on gas supplies in Europe has helped fuel rocketing inflation and driven up household bills, with analysts expecting the energy price cap to rise to £3,554 in October.

But No 10 insisted that there was [no risk to UK energy supplies](#) and consumers should not panic.

Some of the gas on that Attalos is likely to be used in the UK straight away, but much of it will probably flow to Europe through the pipelines that connect Britain to the continent.

There it might be channeled into European gas storage sites and some of it could return to Britain during winter.

Public paid to turn off washing machines

Concerns that shortages on the continent could jeopardise the supply of gas back to the UK were played down by No 10, which highlighted both North Sea production and the use of “reliable partners” such as Norway in ensuring homes could be heated and the lights kept on over the winter.

A No 10 spokeswoman said: “Households, businesses, and industry can be confident they will get the electricity and gas that they need over the winter.

“That’s because we have one of the most reliable and diverse energy systems in the world.”

She said people should not panic or feel they should cut down on energy use.

Spreaker

Due to your consent preferences, you’re not able to view this.

[Open Privacy Options](#)

Subscribe for free to the Daily podcast on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), and [Spreaker](#)

“These decisions, in terms of energy consumption, remain decisions for individuals,” she said. “But what I’m saying is that households, businesses and industry can be confident that they will have the electricity and gas that they need.”

But Downing Street has backed a plan being developed by National Grid that could see households with smart meters being paid to turn off high-energy appliances – such as washing machines – during peak times, to reduce the risk of blackouts this winter.