

Power Outages, Quality Disturbances Cost at \$119B+ a Year - EPRI Study

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PALO ALTO, CA - Power outages and other power quality disturbances are costing the U.S. economy more than \$119 billion a year, according to a study sponsored by EPRI's Consortium for Electric Infrastructure to Support a Digital Society.

The study found that around 2 million establishments in three sectors - digital businesses, continuous process manufacturing and fabrication and other essential services - collectively lose \$45.7 billion annually to outages and another \$6.7 billion to such power quality disturbances as voltage sags. While it confirmed that digital businesses are most sensitive to these problems, they have the lower per-establishment losses for power quality disruptions "because they are part of a newer section in the U.S. economy (that) tend to address power reliability and qualify issues in the design phase."

"In contrast, some firms in more traditional industries don't always consider power quality and reliability issues when upgrading older plants with new computerized machinery," commented Clark Gellings, vice president of energy utilization. "This becomes complicated because most technology-based manufacturing firms today want power that is several magnitudes more reliable and distortion-free than what we typically get from a wall socket."

The study also found that California has the highest costs for both outages and power quality disturbances - between \$13.2- and \$20.4 billion total, without rolling blackouts. Texas ranks second at \$8.3- to \$13.2 billion and New York third at \$6- to \$12.8 billion.

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