



**WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT**  
YOUR CELL C GUIDE TO LOAD SHEDDING



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## HERE WE GO AGAIN!

Load shedding sucks, but it also happens to be a regular occurrence in South Africa. Aside from worrying about buying candles and food going bad in the fridge, these planned power outages have an effect on mobile phone owners and operators. The loss of electricity can lead to some subscribers being without phone signal, leaving people, in some cases, unable to communicate with friends and family.

Load shedding also brings its share of confusion. Complaints surge on social media about everything from loss of connectivity, to data disappearing and more. So, in the interests of getting to the bottom of this, let's answer some of the most frequently issued complaints about mobile phones when load shedding hits.



There is a knock-on effect that lingers after the period of load shedding. In some cases, transformers at substations trip and require Eskom or local municipality manpower to bring those back online, extending the period without power.

Additionally, electricity surges occur when power returns, which may mean that equipment at base stations are affected and need to be replaced or rebooted before those sites can be restored.

Telcos also see the rate of vandalism to network high-sites double during load shedding from its average of around 10-15%.



## WHY DON'T I HAVE A SIGNAL?

Short answer? It's probably because load shedding has taken out the power to your nearest base station.

All sites are equipped with backup batteries. However, we experience high rates of vandalism and theft at network sites and as such have to constantly replace batteries. In addition, load shedding depletes the efficacy of batteries because they are not given adequate time to recharge, which means that battery backup becomes shorter every time.

Backup generators are primarily assigned to base stations where there is a high volume of traffic and it's not possible to get generators to all load shedding affected areas.



## WHY DOES MY FRIEND ON ANOTHER NETWORK HAVE SIGNAL?

It's likely that your friend on another network is near one of their network's base stations that happen to have a backup generator. In this instance, their signal shouldn't drop – unless, of course, it's vandalised, the generator runs out of fuel or a power surge causes the site to trip.

The enduring myth of load shedding and its impact on mobile phone usage is that some networks are completely unaffected. You only need to toss the name of a network into Twitter during or just after an outage for confirmation that you are not alone and that some mates on other networks are also down. You'll see complaints from customers on every single network, but the complaints will emanate from different locations around the country.

While a customer on a certain network may still have a signal in say, Randburg, it may be a different story for another of that network's customers in Bedfordview.



## WHAT CAN I DO?

There are quite a few things you can do to lessen the load shedding blow, which include:

- Check your load shedding schedules and plan accordingly.
- Use our App to check your voice, SMS and data levels and their expiration dates.
- Make sure any electronic devices that don't depend entirely on a power source – smartphone, tablet, laptop and the like – are always fully charged.
- Buy powerbanks and make sure they're fully charged – that way if you're running out of battery for your devices in a power outage, you have back up.

## WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Cell C makes every effort to ensure uptime on its network however, as with all other businesses, we are in some cases affected by load shedding.

Even if there is no power, it does not mean that you cannot use your data. Additionally, daily bundles last for 24 hours, which should provide ample time for customers to make use of it outside of load shedding periods.

When load shedding hits, it's important to bear a couple of things in mind if you're a customer who regularly buys bundles.

Load shedding and signal loss will affect all customers out of range of a base station without a generator – i.e. they will lose their signal.