

News Release



WTIC - TV 3
BROADCAST HOUSE

WTIC 50Kw. 1080Kc.
3 CONSTITUTION PLAZA

WTIC - FM 96.5mc.
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06115

WTIC - FM 96.5mc.
525-0801

For Release On Receipt

Diesel powered generators at Broadcast House in downtown Hartford and the Avon transmitter building 10 miles west of Hartford enabled WTIC TV and Radio to provide uninterrupted service to listeners and the television viewers during the massive power blackout Tuesday night.

Emergency power equipment, "purchased and installed to cope with a situation of this type, kept us on the air when we were most needed by people left literally and figuratively in the dark by the power failure," said Paul W. Morency, president of Broadcast Plaza, Inc., which owns and operates WTIC TV-AM-FM.

WTIC Radio abandoned regular programming completely in order to broadcast all available information on the power failure to a vast audience listening on transistor and automobile radios. Since Channel 3 was reaching only areas that had electric service, regular programming was maintained, with reports on the blackout broadcast every few minutes.

"Since radio was the only link thousands of people had with the darkened world outside their homes," we devoted our resources to gathering and broadcasting information to the radio audience," Morency said.

Newsman and announcers broadcast direct reports from local and state police headquarters, power companies, the governor's office and the top of the Travelers Tower, where WTIC's Dick Bertel could report on the power picture in all directions. The WTIC mobile unit performed a similar function by roaming the greater Hartford area.

The Broadcast House switchboard was swamped with telephone calls. Most callers requested information, but a large number of volunteer "reporters" called to report on the power or lack of power in their home areas.

"Our aim was to provide our listeners with complete information broadcast by familiar voices in a calm manner so that undue apprehension or alarm would be eliminated from the start," said Morency. "I think radio succeeded in reaching that goal."

DATE November 16, 1965
TO Mr. Smith
FROM Paul Abert
SUBJECT Thoughts On Power Re-arrangement

WTIC

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

The recent power failure and our rise to the occasion pointed up some weak spots in our emergency lighting and power arrangement. We need to make some changes in areas and equipment to put them on emergency power.

1. The News Room, Film Edit Room and Photo Lab should be on emergency power. If loading is a problem, emergency lights could be installed to reduce the total load of the three areas.
2. B studio and B Control Room should be on emergency power. Only one studio would be used at a time. Most likely B so that the load would be confined to one studio. An emergency lighting outlet should be installed in B Studio.
3. Indicator lights, perhaps red and green, should be installed in Master Control to indicate whether the generator or line is supplying power to all equipment.
4. A permanent AC volt meter should be installed in the commercial power line supplying the Master Control Room and mounted there.
5. A means of remotely switching from our generator back to line and vice versa should be installed in the Master Control Room.
6. All tape machines and all film chains should be on the emergency power circuit.
7. ^{TWX}~~Teletype~~ machines should be on the emergency power circuit.
8. Flashlights or electric lanterns should be placed at strategic locations such as in the control rooms, the TV studios, News Room, Film Edit Room and Photo Lab.
9. Can the overhead door be opened when power is off?
10. We should take further steps to acquaint all our personnel with our emergency set up.


PA:s1

Date: November 10, 1965
 To: K. Smith
 From: R. B. du Four
 Subject: NEW YORK-NEW ENGLAND POWER FAILURE, COVERAGE OF
 Tuesday, November 9, 1965

The following is a chronological listing of coverage given to the great New York-New England power failure of Tuesday, November 9:

- 5:19-5:21 PM - Intermittent interruption of commercial power both at the transmitter and at the studios. Both transmitter and studio went on emergency power at that time.
- 5:37:50-5:38:40 PM - Apology for poor audio and video.
- 5:48:40-5:48:55 PM - Apology for poor audio and video.
 (There was no indication at this time of the magnitude of the power outage.)

Special news reports updating the power outage and warning residents to turn off motorized electrical equipment as a precautionary measure were given at the following times. (These do not include stories in regular newscasts.)

- 7:00-7:03:25 PM
- 7:25:35-7:26:27 PM
- 7:39:57-7:40:40 PM
- 7:59:54-8:00:26 PM
- 8:16:32-8:17:07 PM
- 8:32-8:33 PM
- 9:02:47-9:03:18 PM
- 9:30-9:32:05 PM
- 9:58:30-9:59:25 PM
- 11:23-11:24 PM
- 11:52:50-11:54:19 PM
- 12:12:30-12:13:20 AM
- ~~12:26:45-12:26:43 AM~~ ? 12:27:43 AM
- 12:44:02-12:45:15 AM
- 12:57:47-12:58:35 AM

In addition, there were two CBS Special Reports: 8:33-8:36 PM and 8:48-8:50 PM.

The CBS National Citizenship Test was pre-empted at 10 o'clock for a power outage report from CBS. This concluded at 10:59:30.

There was no video on the RED SKELTON SHOW from 8:30-8:50 PM. We took the audio, used a stand-by slide, and gave video courtesy at 8:45.

NEW YORK-NEW ENGLAND POWER FAILURE, COVERAGE OF
Tuesday, November 9, 1965

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The Channel 3 transmitter was on emergency power from 5:19 to 7:58 PM. The studio facilities were on emergency power from 5:19 to 11:45 PM. Parts of our operation not covered by emergency power returned to commercial power as soon as it stabilized. Emergency generator was kept running not only as a precautionary measure but as the first real endurance test for this piece of equipment.

RBdF:ITT

RBdF
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File

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January 20, 1966

WILL THE REAL "STATION B" PLEASE STAND UP?

In its official report on station performance during the Nov. 9 northeast power failure, the Federal Communications Commission cites two examples of "exemplary operation" by radio stations.

The stations were identified only as "Station A" and "Station B."

"Station B came on the air within minutes of the first power failure in its area. The station was off the air for less than three minutes in all. Within 30 minutes of the first power failure, the station's news department gave a brief report of the areawide blackout. For six hours, announcers and newsmen provided continuous voice programming covering the complete story of the blackout. During this period, 40 separate broadcasts were aired from the power company, state police headquarters, the governor's office and affected points throughout the service area. Complete facilities were made available to state and local police, to the governor and to the state civil defense director. News reports were relayed back to the studio from widely scattered mobile units. In many instances these were the first authentic reports received by government officials," according to the FCC report.

WTIC was on the air within three minutes of the power failure and the news department was providing blackout news within 30 minutes. For six hours, announcers and newsmen provided continuous news of the blackout. In the period, 40 separate broadcasts were aired from key points in the area, including the governor's office, according to a report submitted by WTIC to the FCC. The station's complete facilities were made available to police and state officials and in many cases, key officials received their first authentic reports from information relayed by WTIC staff members.

The FCC report was compiled from data submitted by 298 radio stations in the northeast.

