



National
Operational
Guidance

Control measure

**Apply situational awareness: Utilities
and fuel**



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

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Control measure knowledge

Situational awareness concerns the perception and understanding of a situation, along with anticipating how the situation may develop in the near future. It should assist the fire and rescue service in making safe and informed decisions.

Situational awareness should be gained by gathering information about:

- What utility or fuel supplies or storage facilities are involved
- Which utility or fuel needs to be managed and controlled
- The consequences of isolating and controlling utility or fuel supplies
- Isolation points, which may require obtaining information about utilities or fuel from the responsible person for the site
- Any sources of renewable energy generation, such as photovoltaic panels or turbines
- The presence of any uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) or standby generators and what they are used to power

Any decision to isolate utility or fuel supplies should consider the implications on critical systems and business continuity. In some circumstances, leaving specific power systems on could be beneficial for resolving the incident.

Even if a site has the benefits of an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) or standby generator, these facilities have limitations in their use. For more information refer to [Isolation of uninterruptible power supply systems or standby generators](#).

If any utility or fuel supplies cannot be isolated, or a decision has been made not to isolate them, this should be communicated to personnel and other emergency responders.

Depending on the size and complexity of the incident, other agencies and utility response teams may attend, with effective joint decision-making and response being critical for safety on the incident ground.

Situational awareness may be supported by joint training and exercises, to improve familiarisation relating to utility and fuel supplies and storage facilities.

Strategic actions

Fire and rescue services should:

- Participate in joint training and exercises to improve the familiarisation of personnel with utility and fuel supplies and storage facilities

Tactical actions

Incident commanders should:

- Gather information to gain situational awareness about utility and fuel supplies and storage facilities
- Before isolating the utility or fuel supplies, consider the impact on any critical systems or business continuity
- Consider if leaving specific power systems on could be beneficial for resolving the incident
- Communicate the details of any utility or fuel supplies that are not isolated to personnel and other emergency responders
- Work with other agencies and response teams if required for effective joint decision-making and response to an incident involving utilities or fuel