

Power Returns After St. Pete Blackout

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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People waiting to take a public bus instead of the St. Petersburg metro, which was out of service Friday evening. **Alexander Demianchuk**

Electricity was restored throughout St. Petersburg on Saturday after a serious blackout the night before left 40 percent of the city's 4.5 million residents without power, city officials said.

"The city is currently living as usual, and all systems related to daily life are working as planned," the city's committee on energy and engineering told Interfax on Saturday.

"At the Vostochnaya power station, where the failure occurred that caused the power outage in the city, a specially created commission has begun working to determine the causes of the accident," the committee said.

The outage occurred at about 6:40 p.m. local time, and power was restored to most areas in about an hour, state television channel Rossia-24 reported.

The city's central district remained without electricity for some time after power was restored in two of the three affected areas, RIA-Novosti reported, citing the local Emergency Situations Ministry office.

Local power generator Lenenergo was taking "all possible measures" to restore power, the electricity distributor said in an e-mailed statement.

Yelena Gris, a spokeswoman for grid firm MES North-West, said Friday that equipment failure at several of its substations was the cause of the blackout.

"It was not an explosion, fire or terrorist attack," she said. "Power is being gradually restored."

The Federal Grid Company, the national power grid operator, said the St. Petersburg nuclear power station was working normally.

TGK-1, another St. Petersburg-based utility, said the power cut was caused by a failure at the Vostochnaya substation, which is not part of the company's network. The cause of the failure is under investigation, TGK-1 spokesman Valentin Shumovsky said.

Taxi drivers raised prices after some subway lines stopped working as people tried to get home from work, Interfax reported. Trolley buses and trams stopped running, and escalators and traffic lights around St. Petersburg and in some of its surrounding region were out of order, it said.

Water supplies were also switched off.

Russian Railways said 27 trains going in the direction of St. Petersburg were temporarily halted. Normal service resumed at 7:30 p.m., the state-run company said in a statement.

Sberbank said Saturday that about 40 percent of its automated teller machines in St. Petersburg were disabled by the outage, and that company officials were still working to bring them back into operation, Interfax reported.

Russia's power industry, running on creaking Soviet-era equipment, has suffered several serious mishaps in recent years, such as a turbine room flood at the Sayano-Shushenskaya hydropower station last year that killed 75 people.

Moscow suffered a power outage in May 2005 that halted traffic and stock trading for several hours after a substation failure. Seven months later, national power utility Unified Energy System cut supplies to some industrial users in the capital to avoid another blackout amid a record cold snap.

(Reuters, Bloomberg, MT, AP)

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