

Why does the power flicker on and off when there's not even a storm?

Reducing Power Flickers

Power flickers ... momentary outages ... brief service interruptions – these are some of the terms used to describe brief outages lasting less than 60 seconds. Regardless of what you call them, they're annoying because they can briefly shut down the electronic devices and appliances in your home or business. You want reliable electric service, and it's our job to provide it.

In years past, the impact was minor, perhaps resulting in a flashing digital clock. But today, many of the items now common in homes and businesses – computers, microwave ovens, TVs, DVRs and more – are highly sensitive to changes in electricity flow. Resetting them can be both frustrating and time-consuming.

Flickers may occur at any time – even on a sunny day – and can be caused by a number of factors, including:

- Lightning strikes (Florida is the lightning capital of the nation)
- Damaged electrical equipment
- Vegetation – tree branches, palm fronds or other debris – making contact with power lines
- Animals interfering with electrical equipment
- Salt spray affecting FPUA equipment in coastal areas

Why does this happen?

One of the most common causes of power flickers is when a tree branch or palm frond is blown into overhead power lines. When the branch makes contact with our lines, the system detects the interference and shuts off electricity to that section of the line for a brief period – usually a few seconds. The tree branch or palm frond typically falls to the ground, allowing service to be restored quickly.

This process allows the system to determine if there is a break in the line or other electrical difficulty. Briefly shutting off power and isolating the problem area helps prevent damage to the electric system, which could result in a longer outage and affect many more customers.

For example, a flicker on your local power line could affect electric service for you and 200 of your neighbors. Without this brief interruption, the outage could last several hours, spread to other power lines and affect service for thousands of customers.

Power flickers can even affect your service if you receive electricity from an underground power line. Underground wires ultimately connect with overhead lines and equipment located elsewhere on the power grid, away from your immediate area. Animals and reptiles also sometimes interfere with underground power cables.

What is FPUA doing about it? We are:

- Targeting power lines that experience the highest number of flickers for improvements, including equipment upgrades and new technology
- Investigating and testing a number of new cutting-edge technologies, including those designed to prevent problems caused by lightning and salt spray
- Clearing vegetation from miles of power lines annually
- Adding new safeguards to discourage interference from animals and birds

What Can You Do?

As we focus on reducing flickers, you can take steps to minimize their effect on your home or business. Devices such as uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) and surge protectors can help maintain the flow of electricity and prevent possible damage to your appliances and equipment. Surge protectors act like electrical sponges, absorbing excess energy and preventing most of it from reaching your electronic devices.

Most importantly, don't plant trees near or under power line. They grow up and will soon become the cause of your flicker.

With more than 99.99 percent service reliability, FPUA is working hard every day to reduce those brief, yet frustrating flickers.

FPUA is requesting your help for water sampling.

Monitoring for lead (Pb) and copper (Cu) is mandated for all community water systems by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Lead and Copper Rule. The purpose of the rule is to protect public health by minimizing Pb and Cu levels in drinking water. The number of sample sites and monitoring frequency is determined for each water system by criteria established in the USEPA Lead and Copper Rule. Fort Pierce Utilities Authority (FPUA) is currently required to sample 30 sites on a triennial basis.



FPUA will be conducting Pb and Cu water sampling during July and August of 2017. FPUA is currently seeking to increase the pool size of available sample sites for this and future sampling events. Sampling for Pb and Cu is easy – a first draw (before the faucet has been used for the day) water sample of 1 liter is collected by the home resident from the cold water tap at the kitchen sink. If you would be interested in participating and/or learning more about FPUA's Pb and Cu sample event please contact:

Karyl Bertram
Water Resources Department
Laboratory Coordinator
772-466-1600 x4379

More information on the USEPA Lead and Copper Rule can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-and-copper-rule>

There's never been a better time to sign up for Tree-Less Billing!

Paperless Billing gives you the same information as a paper bill. The only difference is how you receive it and how easy and convenient it is. And the best part? It's free. Start enjoying all the benefits when you enroll at www.FPUA.com. (Manage My Account)

Get your bill online – no paper clutter

You don't have to manage paper files of your bill.

Pay any way you want, including online

Take control of how, where and when you pay your utility bill. The choice is yours.

Sign up for email reminders so you never forget to pay

We'll even send you email reminders when your bill is available for viewing and when it's time to pay.