

BUSINESSSAFE

BusinessSafe is designed to aid businesses in protecting the safety and well-being of Florida's residents and visitors from threats. BusinessSafe provides private sector partners with open source information, analysis and resources to help protect their businesses and communities.

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BusinessSafe Highlight: Electricity Subsector

Criminal Activity

The electricity subsector of the energy sector provides power to homes, businesses, and other infrastructure components. Due to the reliance of virtually all sectors on electricity, this subsector is integral to a stable and functioning society. While the disruption of electrical operations is a rare occurrence, the potential for such an incident remains a concern due to the importance of the sector to everyday life.

1. **Cyber Attacks** – The electricity subsector, and more specifically, the industrial controls systems within this subsector, are increasingly targeted for cyberattacks. This sector is comprised of various automated technology components and networks that work together to provide power. If compromised, electricity infrastructure may be impacted with cascading effects for customers.

[These hacking groups are eyeing power grids, says security company
Report reveals play-by-play of first U.S. grid cyberattack](#)

2. **Physical Attacks** – In recent years, some of the most common physical security incidents at electrical facilities included theft, surveillance, intrusion, and gunfire. Incidents involving theft usually involve the theft of copper wire, tools, or equipment. Surveillance incidents often involve individuals taking photos of facilities or using drones. Intrusion and gunfire incidents pose serious threats due to the potential for damage to essential equipment.

[California Power Substation Attacked in 2013 Is Struck Again](#)

3. **Copper Theft** – Copper wire is used within the electricity subsector, predominantly in transformers and power transmission and distribution lines. As the value of copper increases worldwide, copper wire becomes an increasingly attractive target for thieves looking to sell the wire. Theft of copper wire from electrical utility equipment may cause injury, disruptions in utility services, power outages, and have economic consequences for utility providers.

[Copper Theft Prevention: Best Practices and Lessons Learned](#)



Florida Fusion Center
(800) 342-0820

FLBusinessSafe@FDLE.state.fl.us

Author: FL8507, Approval: FL8600, HSEC-1, HSEC-2, HSEC-7, FSIN-1

Other Threats and Hazards

The electricity subsector is largely resilient to threats due to continued proactive planning within the sector. However, threats continue to develop and evolve which may challenge this subsector.

1. **Natural Threats** – Natural disasters present a threat to the electricity subsector due to the amount of damage they may cause for electricity infrastructure for extended periods.

[Working Together To Address Wildfire Risks](#)

[Hurricane Michael caused 1.7 million electricity outages in the Southeast United States](#)

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented a number of challenges for the electricity subsector including staffing changes, supply chain disruptions, and reduced economic input.

[COVID-19: Potential Impacts on the Electric Power Sector](#)

2. **Nation-State Actor Activity** – Some adversarial nation states have attempted to gain access to networks affiliated with the U.S. power grid. Intrusions attributed to these actors have utilized common cyber-attack methodologies including spearphishing campaigns for the deployment of malware. In May 2020, President Trump issued an executive order intended to limit the threat posed by potential foreign adversary exploitation of the energy sector supply chain.

[Russian Government Cyber Activity Targeting Energy and Other Critical Infrastructure Sectors](#)

[Executive Order on Securing the United States Bulk-Power System](#)

Resources

The Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council (ESCC) has developed a resource guide to help electric companies, electric cooperatives, and public power utilities entities plan for and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[ESCC: COVID-19 Resource Guide](#)

The U.S. Department of Energy provides recommendations for community members when responding to power outages and other energy emergencies.

[Department of Energy: Community Guidelines for Energy Emergencies](#)

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