

THE PERFECT PRESCRIPTION FOR POWER PROBLEMS



As digitalisation continues to transform our health services, Riello UPS Ltd (UK) General Manager Leo Craig explains why a reliable uninterruptible power supply is the perfect prescription to prevent power problems.

Continuous power plays a pivotal role in our increasingly digitalised healthcare system. Electricity keeps devices like scanners and heart monitors online. It powers the IT and comms networks that manage patient records, schedule appointments, and perform other vital admin functions. And it enables the data produced by wearables and diagnostic devices to play its part in helping patients manage a range of ailments.

When there are problems with the power supply, the consequences can be catastrophic. During August's big blackout, Ipswich Hospital lost power after a faulty battery prevented its backup generator kicking in.

A few weeks before, a similar generator failure hit Southampton General during a power cut. While Ninewells Hospital in Dundee had to discard emergency blood supplies after a power cut knocked out crucial fridges.

There are countless other similar examples of electrical failures that lead to disruption.

Uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) are the ultimate insurance

against such damaging downtime. UPS systems offer "no-break" battery backup when there's a power problem, ensuring medical devices can keep working.

They also act as a bridge until your generators kick in. This gives computers and IT servers time to shut down without losing critical patient data. It also allows emergency lighting, lifts, and ancillary equipment to remain operational.

Prevention Is Better Than Cure

Just like MRI scanners or sensitive lab equipment, UPS systems are complicated devices in their own right. Batteries, capacitors, and fans suffer wear

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and tear and need replacing at regular intervals. Electrical components can unexpectedly break down too.

New UPSs are covered by standard warranties. But warranties only ever offer a best endeavour response. And what if you've got a UPS where the warranty's expired?

Ongoing UPS maintenance provides far greater peace of mind for mission-critical healthcare environments. They spell out the guaranteed time frames for getting you back up and running.

Proactive maintenance also reduces the risk of downtime happening in the first place.

Nobody working in healthcare should need reminding that "prevention is better than cure". That famous saying certainly rings true when it comes to looking after your UPS. Regular servicing has a positive impact on its performance.

Preventive Maintenance Visits (PMVs) are the equivalent of giving your UPS an annual "health check". Engineers give your unit a thorough examination, upgrade software, and identify components – such as fans, capacitors, or batteries

– that are approaching the end of their service life and need replacing.

This TLC lessens the likelihood of your UPS breaking down. And because your system is running at optimum performance, it'll waste less energy, cutting your electricity costs.

Preventive maintenance also promotes improved future-planning and budgeting. For example, proactively scheduling battery or capacitor replacement is far more cost-effective than dealing with an unexpected failure. Proactive maintenance can extend the lifespan of some UPS components by as much as 50% too.

Doing Your Due Diligence

Unfortunately, all UPS maintenance plans aren't created equal. Like many formal contracts, they can be packed with confusing legal jargon, caveats, and get-out clauses.

It's crucial to do your due diligence. Get prospective providers to clarify several key points.

The first – and most important – is how fast will you get help if your UPS breaks down. Most

UPS companies claim to offer 24/7 support and a range of emergency response times. But what does a "response" mean?

Is it an engineer onsite fixing the fault? An automated reply acknowledging the issue or a brief chat with tech support? There's the world of difference when your lifesaving equipment is offline.

Speedy access to spare parts is essential too. It's no good if your maintenance company doesn't have equipment in stock, or if it's hundreds of miles away from your hospital or facility.

Finally, you need to know who will be working on your UPS. You wouldn't let an unqualified surgeon carry out a life or death procedure. The same principle applies here – competence is key!

UPS systems are complex pieces of kit, so it's crucial the service engineer is fully trained and certified. That's even more important if you opt for a third-party maintenance provider, rather than the unit manufacturer.

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