

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 Sector Highlight – Energy Sector

The U.S. energy sector is vital to individuals, businesses, and the economy in the United States. The sector includes more than 10,000 power plants across the U.S., ranging from coal to nuclear and renewable energy, and facilities for the exploration, production, storage, transport, and refinement of oil and natural gas. More than 80 percent of the country's energy infrastructure is owned and maintained by the private sector, supplying fuels to transportation, electricity in residential and business buildings, and more. Florida is the second largest producer of electricity and the fourth largest consumer of electricity in the country. Disruptions to Florida's energy sector can have widespread impacts across multiple sectors and states.

Threats to the Energy Sector

- **Theft:** Criminal actors may tamper with or alter energy meters to steal electricity or attempt to steal wiring and components from electrical facilities and distribution systems. Electric companies use multiple mitigation tools to maintain the security of electric meters and distribution systems. Tampering with electric meters, facilities, or distribution systems is dangerous and can result in serious injury or death from electrocution, explosion or fire. In recent years, [copper wire](#) has been the main target for thieves for monetary gain.
- **Targeted Violence:** Malicious actors have been known to vandalize energy substations, both for recreational reasons and ideological goals. Malicious actors may target electrical facilities across the country, which can have effects on several geographic regions. In December of 2022, such actors [targeted two electrical substations](#) in rural North Carolina using gunfire, leaving tens of thousands without power. This attack launched an investigation and left schools closed and curfews imposed. In February of this year, three men pleaded guilty to conspiring to provide material support to terrorists in order to carry out [attacks against energy facilities](#) in the United States.
- **Cyberattacks:** Industrial control systems within the energy sector are increasingly targeted by cyberattacks. Cyber criminals may use phishing emails to attempt to gain access to facility networks through malicious email links. This access allows the criminals to deploy ransomware to encrypt the company's files, rendering the data unusable by systems that may depend on them. The federal government has tasked the Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response with ensuring cyber resilience of the nation's electric



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power grid and oil and gas infrastructure. Research has shown that malicious actors [routinely target energy companies](#) on the dark web.

- **Natural Disasters:** Natural disasters can impact the energy sector by damaging facilities or assets or interrupting operations for extended periods of time. Individuals and businesses are encouraged to have a natural disaster plan that includes preparing for potential power outages. During Hurricane Irma, nearly two million Floridians were [left without power](#) for an extended period of time due to heavy rainfall and damage to electrical utility sites.

Resources

- Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency ([CISA](#)) provides excellent resources on the energy sector.
- [CISA](#) also provides the sector-specific plan for the energy sector in the United States.
- The Department of Energy ([DOE](#)) provides ample information, news, and blogs.
- [DOE](#) also provides a state energy security plan guide for resiliency and mitigation for the energy sector.



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