



Case Study
Disaster Recovery
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The calm after the storm

No one wants a disaster to happen – a fire, a flood, a storm, or anything that can disrupt power and shut down operations. But if a disaster does happen, the most important consideration – after employee safety – is the continuation of business operations. And a calm, measured, knowledgeable response to the situation can make all the difference toward ensuring that delays in operations are minimized.

On the afternoon of Nov. 19, 2008, Delek Refining, a petroleum refinery in Tyler, Texas, experienced this type of disastrous situation when an explosion caused a fire near the electrical substation in the plant, incurring significant damage and effectively shutting down all operations. In the aftermath, company management had to assess the damage while interacting with various insurance representatives and contractors, with an eye on getting the refinery up and running as soon as possible.

Fortunately, Delek had an existing relationship with National Switchgear for electrical system testing and maintenance, as well as a separate agreement for emergency response needs. National Switchgear's professional engineers and technicians were brought in as part of the recovery team to assess the damage, make recommendations for repair or replacement of equipment, and restore operations at the refinery.

National Switchgear's integrated operation enabled the company to provide a turnkey solution involving three skill sets under one roof. The field service team worked on-site in Tyler to assess and remove damaged components for refurbishment. Back at National Switchgear's headquarters in Lewisville, the electrical and mechanical engineering groups reengineered the damaged equipment, while the manufacturing facility refurbished circuit breakers, switchgear and the motor control center. The company was able to leverage its existing supplier relationships to ensure materials were available and labor was ready to go, with a faster response time than other companies could have provided because a good supply chain was already in place. At the end of the process, National Switchgear installed and tested all parts at Delek's refinery, and the entire project came in under budget and ahead of schedule.

“National Switchgear has an excellent team of field technicians who are very well versed in the equipment we use at Delek,” said Gary Baldwin of Delek Refining. “Their extensive knowledge of our company contributed to their selection for this particular project, and we found them to be very responsive to our needs.”

According to National Switchgear President Doug Powell, it is important for companies to have a good emergency response plan in place to ensure vendors are lined up and the terms of the working agreement are set in advance, ensuring a faster response when the unexpected happens.

“At the end of the day, our level of familiarity with Delek created a great amount of trust between our two organizations,” Powell said. “There was a comfort level, because we knew their systems and they knew we were qualified to do the job. With the supply chain we already had in place, combined with our experienced team of professional engineers and technicians, we were able to get the business going again.”