



**South Western Communications, Inc.**

**Detention Electronics Group**

Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) Service Bulletin      November, 2010

The UPS at your facility provides battery backup to keep your control equipment operating for the short time between failure of the normal utility power and the emergency generator power startup. Most modern generators are up and stable in only a few seconds. Once the generator takes over, your controls receive the power from the generator and the UPS will return to normal and recharge the batteries, preparing for the next power outage.

The UPS may be in any of various sizes and name brands. A small UPS may sit near each of your computers or be located in an equipment cabinet, plugged to a wall outlet, with the computer plugged directly into the UPS. If this is the case, note that these cords are plugged into the UPS outlets marked battery. If they are plugged to the surge only outlet, you only have an expensive power strip with surge suppression.

A larger UPS system may be in the electronics equipment room sitting on the floor with or without a second large cabinet beside it. The second large cabinet would hold the batteries needed to power all of the control equipment at once. The large UPS works the same as the smaller units, but the output is wired directly to wall outlets for the control computers. The equipment cabinets with door, camera, or intercom controls are wired to the large UPS output breaker panel.

Any UPS may have audible alarms that sound when input power is lost, notifying you that it is operating on its internal batteries. Your control system may activate an alarm at the same time. The alarms can usually be silenced, but cannot be reset until power is restored. This is the normal function for these alarms. After utility power returns to normal, the alarms should be available for reset. Most audible alarms on the UPS will then clear by themselves.

Batteries will die from age much like a car battery. The expected battery life varies with the UPS type and the amount of equipment it has to power. The frequency of power outages also has an effect on battery life. The small UPS will typically need the batteries replaced on a cycle of between one and three years. The larger UPS systems may expect to have batteries last three to five years, and often beyond. If the utility power fails and the control equipment stops working immediately, the UPS has failed.

Contact us for your service needs at [service2@swcdec.com](mailto:service2@swcdec.com) or visit us at [www.swcdec.com](http://www.swcdec.com)

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