



Thames Valley

COMMUNICATIONS

A Division of Groton Utilities

Each Spring and Fall, cable companies experience a technical phenomenon called "sun outages." For a period of about 2 weeks, the sun causes "solar interference" to all geostationary satellite signals. As the sun's path across the sky gets lower each day, there are times when it is in a direct line behind a communication satellite that is sending signals to a receiving satellite dish here on earth. When the dish antenna is looking into the sun, the interference from the sun overrides the signals from the satellite. This is when a sun outage occurs.

Sun outages occur during the months of February/March and September/October and can last as long as 15 minutes a day and take place over a period of 15 days. The effects of a sun outage vary in degree from minimal to total outage throughout the 15-day period. Once it reaches its peak, the interference will gradually decrease becoming less noticeable each day after.

Unfortunately, there is technically nothing we can do to prevent sun outages from occurring. Each satellite service that we receive signals from will experience this interference at predictable times. During these times, we will provide a schedule for you to confirm the possibility that the channel you may be viewing is experiencing a sun outage. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you.

Sun Outage Effects

At first, the effects of a sun outage are minimal, beginning as "sparkles" in the picture during the first days. Gradually, it worsens to the point of total outage. Some channels will experience "blocks" or "freeze frames" in the picture before and after the peak times. These are the channels we receive digitally from the satellite.



Interference begins as "sparkles" gradually becoming more "snowy."



Some channels will get "blocks" or "freeze frames" in the picture.

Once it reaches its peak, the interference will gradually decrease becoming less noticeable each day after. Unfortunately, there is technically nothing we can do to prevent these sun outage effects. The best advice we can offer when experiencing this phenomenon is to be patient while the sun outage passes naturally.