



What is dispatchable power

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As we look to decarbonize our grid, understanding what dispatchable generation and dispatchable power are becomes crucial. The energy industry is balancing the need for reliable, dispatchable power from traditional fossil-fuel based sources with the integration of more intermittent clean energy renewables.

To better understand the differences between dispatchable and intermittent power generation and load, we've put together the following Q& A, answering a handful of the most frequently asked questions.

Dispatchable generation refers to power sources that can be adjusted on demand by grid operators to match supply with electricity demand. Examples of dispatchable generation include coal-fired plants, natural gas plants, and large hydroelectric plants that can quickly ramp up or down depending on the grid's needs.

Dispatchable power is the capacity of these generation resources to provide reliable electricity when needed. It plays a fundamental role in grid stability by ensuring that fluctuations in demand can be met in real-time, which is critical in maintaining uninterrupted power supply and avoiding outages.

A dispatchable asset is an electric power resource, such as a power plant, that can quickly adjust the amount of electricity it supplies to the grid. Dispatchable assets can be ramped up to provide more electricity to meet demand, or they can be dialed back if less electricity is required.

Dispatchable assets differ from dispatchable loads, which are the flexible electricity consuming activities of customers that a grid operator can scale up or down based on overall grid conditions. For example, smart thermostats that can be adjusted by the grid operator are a dispatchable load.

Firm dispatchable power is the amount of power or power producing capacity that a generating plant or transmission facility expects to always be available. Having enough firm dispatchable power safeguards the stability of the grid by ensuring there's enough supply to meet demand.

Dispatchable resources include most conventional power sources, such as coal, nuclear power, natural gas, and some hydroelectric generating facilities.

Many renewable resources are considered non-dispatchable because they are inherently intermittent. For example, wind and solar aren't dispatchable because the wind isn't always blowing and the sun isn't always shining. However, a battery energy storage system connected to a renewables plant would be considered dispatchable because the stored electricity can be released on demand.

Most hydroelectric generators are dispatchable, but it's important to note that some aren't. A pumped hydro system, which moves water downhill from one reservoir to another would be dispatchable, while one that uses

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a single water source may, at times, be non-dispatchable as reservoir levels fluctuate. If the water drops below a certain level during an extended draught, the hydroelectric plant may no longer be able to generate electricity on demand.

Availability is the primary difference between dispatchable and non-dispatchable resources. Dispatchable resources are those that can quickly provide electricity when called upon. Conversely, non-dispatchable generation resources can't be ramped up or down to meet the needs of intermittent loads, or fluctuations in demand.

Dispatchable capacity is the maximum amount of electricity a grid operator can control and adjust at any given moment to meet customer demand.

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