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Outage FAQs

When a storm threatens, we support you 24/7. Here are some common answers to questions about what we do before, during, and after outage events.

Why can't I get a restoration time for my power to be back on? >

We don't provide individual restoration times until we're sure of all needed repairs. Careful assessment of damage and planning for repairs ensures more accurate times when we do provide them.

How are restoration times determined? >

Estimated times of restoration (ETRs) are based on information from the field as it becomes available; both from customers calling in to report outages and from our crews. Using that information, we refine our restoration plan and estimate when service could be returned to individual customers. After visiting the site, crews may find more damage, which takes more time to fix and creates adjustments for the ETRs.

Do customers with medical certifications get their power restored first? >

We're concerned about the well-being of customers most vulnerable in power outages. However, critical facilities and infrastructures are restored first, such as hospitals, fire and police stations, water purification facilities, etc. You should always be prepared with battery-or-manually-powered medical equipment. For longer outages, have a plan to receive proper care somewhere else until service is restored.

If you or someone in your household requires the use of electrically-powered medical equipment, [use this request form](#) to be added to our medical conditions list. The form requires a physician's statement and signature. ***You must complete a form each year and we must receive it within 30 days of the anniversary date of the last form you sent.*** Otherwise, we will assume the condition no longer exists and the medical notation on your account will be removed.

Why does my neighbor have power and I don't? >

Storm damage can affect main power lines, individual circuits or both. It's possible your individual circuit may be damaged or you could be on a different main power line than your neighbor. If your neighbor's power is back on but yours is not, please report your outage.

When do you make repairs? >

Restoration work is performed around the clock, as long as conditions are safe to do so. Field crews work up to 16 hours a day following major events, mostly during daylight hours to maximize their efficiency. At night, a smaller number of workers are in the field, handling public safety issues and continuing restoration work. We also have workers analyzing damage reports, organizing the next day's work and replenishing supplies.

Why do I sometimes see your crews sitting in parking lots and not working? >

Our crews may park while they are waiting for their next work assignments, additional line crews to arrive, and/or information necessary to safely complete repairs. Also, crews traveling in from other areas often assemble at staging

areas and perform safety briefings before starting their assigned project. Crews often use computers in their trucks to send status updates or information about storm damage to analysts and field personnel.

Why do you call me to verify my lights are on? >

When a storm event causes extensive damage in an area, we must contact individual customers to determine whether power has successfully been restored to the entire line. By verifying your lights are on, you're helping confirm we've repaired all the damage.

Who's responsible when the service connection to my home is damaged? >

View information on [meter damage and repair](#).

Why does my power come on (for hours sometimes), and then go back out and stay out? >

While we make repairs in your area, your service may go on and off intermittently so our crews can safely make repairs. Our crews sometimes have to make temporary repairs to quickly restore power, and then service may be disrupted later to complete permanent repairs.

Why did one of your trucks come to our neighborhood but not stop? >

Following a storm, our field crews first assess the damage before work can begin. This is why you may have seen our trucks pass through your neighborhood without stopping. The information they gather is used to identify and plan repairs, then work crews are sent out.

Do you clean up after storms? >

Our primary focus after storms is restoring power quickly and safely. As crews restore power, they will cut away trees that have fallen on lines or remove trees as necessary to fix the line or equipment. To move as quickly as possible to the next repair location, the crews will generally leave the debris in place.

- For debris on roadways, call your local department of transportation for removal.
- For debris on personal property or public rights-of-way, contact your local government/county for assistance.

What are the causes of power outages? >

Weather is the leading cause, but people and animals can also cause power outages:

- **Lightning** often strikes transmission line towers, utility poles, wires, transformers and other electrical equipment, causing severe damage and loss of power.
- **Strong winds** can swing some power lines together and trigger a short circuit. Winds also blow tree limbs or entire trees onto power lines. Severe winds, such as from hurricanes and tornadoes, can destroy large areas of lines and utility poles.
- **Weight** from ice, snow and tree limbs can cause power lines to break.
- **Water** (heavy rain, floods, etc.) can trigger power outages by damaging overhead and underground electrical equipment.
- **Coastal salt contamination** and moisture can cause equipment to fail.
- **Construction accidents**, design or material flaws can cause underground cable failures. Note: Always [call before you dig](#) to avoid cable damage.
- **Traffic accidents** are a common cause of power outages where poles may be severely damaged.
- **Animals** can cause power outages by climbing onto or inside energized equipment.

- **Trees and limbs** can fall on power lines regardless of weather, sometimes destroying a span of lines and supporting structures.
- **Momentary outages** (indicated by flickering or dimming of lights) are usually caused by short circuits when something like a tree limb comes in contact with a power line or when lines touch each other. Electrical equipment is designed to automatically open and close the breaker 2-3 times to clear the problem.

How do you prepare for major storms? >

- We monitor the weather forecast and plan our storm response accordingly.
- When conditions allow, we send field crews to areas most likely to be affected by the storm.
- We also staff local offices with additional restoration management and patrol teams who assess damage immediately after the weather clears and it is safe for them to work.
- For large-scale events, we often request help from other utility companies and out-of-state contractors.
- View a video on how we prepare for storms/hurricanes:

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