

After a major power outage

SECO's Steps to Restoring Power

Step 1. Transmission towers and lines supply power to one or more transmission substations. These lines seldom fail, but they can be damaged by a hurricane, tornado or any number of other natural disasters. Tens of thousands of people could be served by one high-voltage transmission line, so if there is damage here it gets attention first.

Step 2. A co-op has many local distribution substations, each serving thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, the local distribution substations are checked right away. A problem here could be caused by failure in the transmission system supplying the substation or an equipment problem inside the substation. If the problem can be corrected at the substation level, power can be restored to a large number of people.

Step 3. Main distribution supply lines are checked next. These supply lines carry electricity away from the local distribution substation to large numbers of consumers. A co-op may have well over one hundred of these circuits. When power is restored at this stage, all consumers served by this supply line could see the lights come on. Hospitals and special needs facilities receive priority for power restoration.

Hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, or other natural disasters – electric cooperative members have seen them all. And with such severe weather come power outages. Restoring power after a major outage is a big job that involves much more than simply throwing a switch or removing a tree from a line.

The main goal is to restore power safely to the greatest number of members in the shortest time possible. The major cause of outages is damage caused by fallen trees. That's why your electric cooperative has an ongoing tree trimming program. This illustration explains how power typically is restored after a major disaster.

Enlarged area: Consumers themselves (not the co-op) are responsible for damage to the service installation on the building. Your co-op can't fix anything beyond this point. Contact a licensed electrician.

Step 5. Sometimes, damage will occur on the service line between your house and the transformer on the nearby pole. This can explain why you have no power when your neighbor does. Your co-op needs to know you have an outage here, so a service crew can repair it.

Other Co-ops
During a major outage, other cooperatives send line crews to assist with restoring power. We call for these additional crews, as well as communications, equipment, and supplies well in advance of a major storm like a hurricane.

Report your outage to the cooperative office. Our employees will be working as quickly as possible to resolve your problem. We appreciate your patience and understanding.

To report a power outage call SECO's Emergency hotline:
1-800-SECO-141

Danger
Stay Clear of Fallen Lines

Illustration adapted from North Carolina's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives.