

Hurricane Matthew: Electric Companies Respond

October 12, 2016

Situational Update – Final

- Electric companies have made significant progress in restoring power to customers affected by Hurricane Matthew. As of 4:45 p.m. EDT, 95 percent of the approximately 3.2 million affected customers served by EEI member companies had their service restored.
- As of 4:45 p.m. EDT, less than 260,000 customers^[1] are without power as a result of the storm, including customers who are served by investor-owned electric companies (EEI's member companies), electric cooperatives, and municipal utilities.
- Efforts are ongoing to restore power as safely and efficiently as possible to all customers capable of receiving it. Companies will not stop their storm restoration efforts until the last customer who can receive power is restored.
- Affected companies appreciate the understanding and patience of their customers during this time. Visit EEI's website to find [images of the restoration process](#).
- Overall, approximately 30,000 workers^[2] were dedicated to the recovery effort. This includes crews and lineworkers from the impacted companies and the industry's mutual assistance network who continue to work around the clock, provided conditions are safe to do so.
- In cases where a meter or other customer equipment has been damaged by high winds or flooding, repair and inspection may be required, delaying the restoration of service for individual customers.
- In some heavily damaged areas, electric companies may need to rebuild, rather than restore, the energy infrastructure.

Hurricane Matthew Response

- Electric companies' restoration efforts are moving as quickly and safely as possible, and companies are coordinating with local officials. Companies affected by the storm, and the mutual assistance crews assisting the restoration effort, continue to work around the clock to restore power to all customers capable of receiving it as safely and efficiently as possible. EEI applauds the tireless efforts the crews and companies continue to demonstrate around the clock.
- During the storm restoration process, electric companies typically restore power first to emergency services and facilities critical to public health and safety—including hospitals, police and fire stations, water treatment plants, and communications systems—before focusing on communities and neighborhoods.

^[1] Outage numbers will vary as customers' service is restored. These numbers are gathered in real time by EEI's outage tracking tool and include customers affected by the storm who are served by investor-owned electric companies, electric cooperatives, and municipal utilities.

^[2] This number reflects only the investor-owned electric company response effort.

- Mutual assistance crews from across the country are assisting electric companies in the impacted regions. After restoration is completed in some regions, crews were reallocated to the areas where they are needed most. The mutual assistance network is a hallmark of the electric power industry.
- Response to Hurricane Matthew benefited from close coordination across the sector and with the Department of Energy and other government partners.
- Throughout the event, the CEO-led Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council (ESCC) monitored restoration activities to ensure unity of effort across the highest levels of industry and government.
- Significant investments in storm hardening and grid modernization and recent changes in public policy also made a difference in supporting storm response and restoration activities.
- By working with state emergency management and transportation agencies, the electric power industry has developed a framework to seek regulatory waivers and to expedite the movement of crews and heavy equipment through tolls and weigh stations.

Customers Are Urged To Stay Safe

- Conditions still remain hazardous in many locations, and electric customers are urged to be prepared for the possibility of extended power outages. Restoration may still be a multi-day event in some areas.
- Customers who see downed power lines should assume they are energized, stay away from them, and contact their local electric company.
- In flooded areas, customers should avoid walking into or driving through standing water as it may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines. Customers also should never go into a basement with standing water in it unless they are sure that the power is off.
- After a storm, some customers may not be able to receive power to their homes because of the damage caused by high winds or continued flooding. Many local codes require that a licensed electrician or plumber do any repair work or that a city/county inspector check the system before power can be restored. If your meter box, pipes, or wires are bent or broken, contact a licensed electrician. Do not touch damaged equipment. If the meter itself is damaged, restoration workers will replace it.
- For safety reasons, customers are urged not to approach electric company workers or contractors in a work zone as they make repairs. Please exercise caution when driving near or around work zones.
- Customers are encouraged to follow their local electric company on social media channels (Twitter and Facebook) and visit company websites for updates and estimated restoration times.
- Motorists should treat non-functioning traffic signals as four-way stops. Travel in affected areas should be minimized to allow crews and other emergency workers to respond.
- Customers should be aware that scammers and cyber criminals are targeting victims of Hurricane Matthew. Be on the lookout for suspicious emails and criminals impersonating electric company representatives.

EI Activities

- Throughout Hurricane Matthew, EEI coordinated closely with our members' mutual assistance representatives in the Regional Mutual Assistance Groups; trade association partners; NERC; and the federal government on the industry's response to the storm and to ensure unity of message.
- EEI posted on social media and amplified safety messages and company messages at this time on our storm center. We continue to compile company restoration stories and mutual assistance coordination efforts that showcase the industry's storm response and restoration efforts.