

Harvey Update

September 3, 2017

Five Key Things To Know Today

- Customers and rescuers should continue to exercise extreme caution when entering homes that have flooded, avoid downed power lines that may be energized, and be careful when using generators. Never touch damaged electrical equipment.
- According to the [Centers for Disease Control](#), the initial damage caused by a flood is not the only risk. Standing flood waters also can spread infectious diseases, bring chemical hazards, and cause injuries. If your home was flooded, practice safe cleaning. Wear gloves and protective clothing. Remove and throw out drywall and insulation that was contaminated with flood water or sewage. Throw out items that cannot be washed and cleaned with a bleach solution: mattresses, pillows, carpeting, carpet padding, and stuffed toys. Clean walls, hard-surfaced floors, and other household surfaces with soap and water and disinfect with a solution of one cup of bleach to five gallons of water.
- Progress continues to be made to restore power in areas where damage assessments are complete. Some areas remain inaccessible due to high waters and ongoing flooding.
- For public and first responder safety, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner has ordered CenterPoint Energy to disconnect electric service to about 4,600 flooded dwellings. Power will be restored when Mayor Turner directs the company to do so, provided that the dwellings are able to receive power. [Additional information is available from the City of Houston.](#)
- While it is too soon to know the track of Hurricane Irma, it is not too soon to be prepared. The electric power industry is monitoring the storm. Mutual assistance crews are able to continue supporting Harvey restoration efforts, while the industry also prepares for any potential impacts from Hurricane Irma. Customers also should watch forecasts closely and take steps now to protect their families and their property. [Learn more.](#)

Safety Remains Paramount—Use Caution When Returning Home

- Flooding caused by Harvey continues to hinder power restoration efforts in Texas, where many areas remain inaccessible.
- Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with those who have been impacted by Harvey. Ensuring the safety of customers, communities, and crews is the electric power industry's highest priority.

- As flood waters recede in some areas, water levels remain dangerously high elsewhere. Customers who are returning to their homes should exercise extreme caution, as downed power lines and electrical equipment that have come into contact with flood waters pose a serious danger.
- Customers who see downed power lines or submerged transformers or other electrical equipment should assume they are energized, stay away from them, and contact their local electric company. Downed power lines and submerged electrical equipment may energize water, posing a lethal hazard to humans and animals.
- Customers who must operate a boat in flooded areas should use caution around power lines to ensure boats and their occupants do not contact energized lines or energized water.
- Customers should not enter a flooded room or basement if water could be in contact with electrical outlets, appliances, or cords. Customers should turn off power at the breaker box only if they are able to do so safely and without standing in water.
- Customers should not use electrical appliances or touch electrical wires, switches, or fuses when wet or when standing in water.
- Electrical appliances and equipment that have been submerged in water need to be checked by a qualified repair person before use. If the outside unit of an air conditioning system has been under water, mud and water may have accumulated in the controls; customers should have the unit checked by a qualified air conditioning technician.
- Customers should never use a portable generator inside a home, garage, crawl space, other enclosed areas, or anywhere exhaust fumes can enter into enclosed spaces.
- Customers should keep electrical tools and equipment at least 10 feet away from wet surfaces.
- As power is being restored, customers are reminded to clear cooktops and electric stoves of any debris, and ovens should be turned off.
- 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.
- In some areas, electric company customers are being targeted by scammers, and customers are urged to be aware of suspicious emails, phone calls, or persons impersonating electric company employees.

Power Restoration Is Ongoing

- Crews continue to clear downed power lines and other hazards, and progress is being made to restore power safely and quickly in areas where damage assessments are complete and flooding is not an issue.
- We know that being without electricity creates hardships, and we greatly appreciate customers' patience as electric companies work to restore power where and when conditions are safe to do so.
- Every electric company has a detailed plan for restoring electricity after a storm. Typically, one of the first steps a company takes—to prevent injuries and fires—is to make sure that power is no longer flowing through downed lines. Restoration then proceeds based on established priorities, starting with damaged energy grid infrastructure and then proceeding to essential services. Learn more [here](#).
- Our crews are working around the clock and will continue to work until everyone who is able to receive power is restored. While customers may not see electric company personnel in their neighborhoods, the energy grid is heavily interconnected and crews are working throughout the system to bring power back on quickly and safely.

- In some cases, companies may have to turn off customers' electricity proactively in order to prevent long-term damage to the energy grid that extends outage and restoration times.
- Catastrophic flooding and damage continue to prevent crews from getting to the hardest-hit areas. Crews may be unable to safely navigate or reach areas to assess damage or restore power to customers. Restoration estimates in these areas will be unavailable until road conditions improve.
- Customers also may see crews in their area who then move on. In many cases, these crews are scouts, who are assessing damage to determine what type of equipment and crews will be needed to repair the equipment.
- Electric companies may use helicopters as part of the assessment process to survey larger energy infrastructure like transmission lines and substations near rivers and bayous. Drones also are in use to assess damage in areas that crews cannot navigate on foot.
- Damage assessments may determine that some customers are unable to receive power to their homes. Customers may need to contact a licensed electrician before power can be restored.
- 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. This will delay the restoration of service for individual customers.

Cooperation Remains Critical

- At this point, more than 10,000 workers are dedicated to the Harvey response and recovery effort. This includes crews, lineworkers, and support personnel from the impacted companies and the industry's mutual assistance network.
- Mutual assistance crews from at least 21 states across the country are responding, and additional resources are ready to mobilize to assist impacted companies and communities if needed to further support restoration.
- Mutual assistance goes beyond crews—resources and equipment including manned and unmanned aerial systems, high-water apparatus, and transformer parts are being allocated and shared among electric companies to ensure all restoration and recovery needs are met.
- Responding to major events like Harvey requires significant coordination among many public and private sectors. For example, there are interdependencies among the energy, communications, supply chain, transportation, and water and wastewater sectors. Strong industry-government coordination is critical.
- The electric power industry and impacted companies continue to work with the government at the highest level. The CEO-led Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council (ESCC) is coordinating with government partners, impacted companies, and across the sector. The ESCC and DOE are holding multiple calls each day for industry and government to coordinate restoration efforts.
- Visit www.fema.gov/hurricane-harvey to learn how to help support restoration and recovery for the communities impacted by Harvey.
- Many different rumors are circulating on social media and elsewhere. Please visit <https://www.fema.gov/hurricane-harvey-rumor-control> for the latest information.

Tracking Hurricane Irma

- At the same time the industry is responding to Harvey, we also are monitoring Hurricane Irma, now in the Atlantic Ocean. Companies are prepared to respond and to provide support as the storm develops and the track becomes more certain.
- While it's too early to know the track that Hurricane Irma will take, it is not too early to get ready:
 - Read EEI's [hurricane-safety tips](#).
 - Develop an emergency plan that addresses any special medical needs you or your family members have. Call your local emergency management office to discuss necessary arrangements.
 - Have your [Emergency Outage Kit](#) stocked and readily available.
 - Know all evacuation routes if you live close to the coast. If you or anyone you know has special needs in case of evacuation, contact your local emergency management office. Find the phone number at www.FEMA.gov.
 - Pay attention to local weather reports on the radio, television, or Internet.
 - Stock up on non-perishable food, water, medications, and any other necessities such as infant supplies to avoid the need for travel during the storm. If called to evacuate, do so immediately.
 - Learn what to do in case of a [power outage](#).