



GENERAL
MANAGER

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10 Things You Might Not Know About Power Restoration

AS THE GENERAL MANAGER of Karnes Electric Cooperative, I'm accustomed to members' questions about power outages and why it can take time to get the lights back on. Given our reliance on electricity, there's simply never a good time to be without it.

This month I'd like to shed light on our restoration process to help our members understand what can happen behind the scenes. Here are 10 things you might not know about restoration.

1. We need you. When your power goes out, it might be just your home or a small section of a neighborhood that's affected. There's a chance we don't know about it and that no one has reported it. Let us know if your power is out.

2. Our employees might be affected. Because Karnes EC is a local business, our employees are local too. When you're without power, our people might be too.

3. It's a team effort. Every one of our employees are working to get your power restored as soon as possible. Our member services representatives take your calls, engineers and field staff survey damage, our vegetation management team clears hazards, dispatchers organize crews, and communicators keep everyone informed of progress or potential dangers. When your power goes out, we all work together as quickly and safely as possible.

4. We assess the situation first. Every outage is different, bringing different dangers and damaged equipment. We first need to see what happened, then figure out what materials we need and make a plan for how to fix the problems.

5. We have priorities for restoring power. Our crews focus first on public safety issues and critical services like hospitals. Then we complete work that impacts the largest number of people.

6. Our employees face many hazards. Besides working around high-voltage electricity, our crews are on alert for wild animals, active weather, falling trees and fast-moving cars.

7. Flickering lights are a good thing. "Blinks" are sometimes mistaken for outages, but they actually indicate our equipment worked and prevented a possible outage.

8. You need a backup plan. We always do our best to help those who need it, but if you depend on electricity for life support purposes, you must have a backup plan.

9. Our employees have to plan and eat. If you ever see our trucks in a restaurant parking lot while your power is out, know that sometimes our employees huddle in a safe common area to map out their plan for getting your power back on. Also, our crews work long, hard hours during outages and need to take time for meals.

10. Sometimes it's a waiting game. Our portion of the power grid is connected to other electric utilities. If our outage is due to an issue from their feed into our system, we must let them do their repairs to get the power flowing again.

If the lights go out, know that your co-op team is working as quickly and safely as possible to restore power. ■

COMMON CAUSES OF POWER OUTAGES

There is never a good time for the power to go out, but if it happens on a sunny day, you might be left wondering why. Here are the most common causes of a power outage.



WEATHER

High winds, snow and ice can cause tree limbs to fall on power lines. Other weather effects, like wildfires and lightning strikes, can cause major damage to equipment.



CRITTERS

Squirrels, birds, snakes and other animals can inadvertently contact power lines, causing short circuits and disruptions to electrical supply.



ACCIDENTS

Vehicles can crash into utility poles, bringing down power lines. Construction and excavation work can also result in disruptions to underground lines.



MAINTENANCE

Occasionally, we plan outages to perform upgrades or repairs to parts of the local grid.