



OG&E Offers Tips For Storm-Related Outages

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Plus, two new features launched to enhance outage communications

It's that time of year again – flowers, warmer weather and spring storms. In this part of the country, spring storms can often result in power outages.

"Most outages caused by storms last less than an hour," said Christina Dukeman, OG&E spokeswoman. "At times, however, widespread or severe damage may result in some outages that can last for extended periods."

Dukeman said during storm restoration, OG&E's first priority is to restore power to health care facilities, fire and police departments and the media.

"Then, we work key points in our system that affect the largest number of customers," Dukeman said. "Our goal is to restore power as quickly and as safely as possible."

OG&E has several tips for customers to observe during outages. In addition, OG&E customers can now report outages online and a new automated callback system helps ensure that repairs have been made.

Start preparing, now

Here are steps customers can take to help minimize the inconvenience of prolonged outages.

- Assemble a "storm" kit that contains items such as a battery-powered radio and/or television, flashlights with fresh batteries and a wind-up clock. Keep it in a central location where each member of the family can access it easily.
- Develop a list of emergency telephone numbers to keep on hand during an outage. Include OG&E's telephone number to report outages – 272-9595 for customers who live in the Oklahoma City area or 1-800-522-6870 for those in all other areas. Remember, a cordless telephone will not work if the power is out. Be sure to have a corded telephone for backup.
- Keep a supply of bottled water, canned foods and items like dried fruit, granola, crackers, nuts and juice. Remember to have a hand-operated can opener available.
- People who live alone, are homebound, have life-support equipment or who live in a secluded area should arrange for someone to check on them during severe weather.

Customers who lose power during a storm

- Check to see if a fuse has blown or if the circuit breaker has been tripped.
- If that's not the problem, calls OG&E. Don't assume that the neighbors have called. To report an outage, customers in the Oklahoma City area should call: 272-9595. Customers outside the Oklahoma City area should call: 1-800-522-6870. During large, widespread outages, OG&E activates its automated answering system that can handle up to 1,800 calls at a time. The system generates an outage ticket that is sent to work crews.
- Disconnect or shut off any appliances that will come back on automatically when power is restored. This includes furnaces, air conditioners, water heaters, refrigerators, freezers and water pumps. Also, make sure electric space heaters, electric ranges, washers, dryers and TV sets are shut off. Leave one or two lamps switched on so you'll know when the power comes back on. Then, you can turn your appliances back on one at a time over a period of 15 minutes or so.

Safety tips

- Stay away from downed power lines. They may appear to be harmless, but could be live.
- If a person or object is in contact with a power line, don't touch the person, object or line. The electric current could flow through you. Call OG&E at 1-800-522-6870, immediately.
- If your vehicle is in contact with a power line, stay inside the car. Warn others not to touch the car or power line. If you must leave your vehicle, jump clear to avoid being in contact with the car and the ground at the same time and then roll away from the car.
- Assume all objects touching power lines are also energized. Never attempt to remove trees or limbs from any utility lines. Notify OG&E of the situation.
- If you have a basement in your home, never attempt to turn off your power, open circuit breakers, remove fuses or operate switches while standing in water.

Enhanced outage communications

"OG&E customers can now report outages online at www.oge.com," Dukeman said. "In addition, a new automated callback system is also available to ensure that repairs are made before restoration crews leave certain work areas."

Dukeman said although customers may be without power at home, many have laptop computers, which run by battery, Internet access at work and/or at the home of relatives, neighbors and friends.

The new outage-reporting feature also allows customers to report: partial power, blinking lights, dim lights, downed power lines and security light outages.

"To report an outage online, customers will need to sign up for OG&E's online services at www.oge.com," Dukeman said.

With OG&E's new callback system, customers who call to report an outage could receive an automated follow-up telephone call to verify that their power has been restored.

"Some restoration circumstances make it difficult to know if power has been restored," Dukeman said. "The callback system ensures that the job was successful before OG&E repair crews leave the area."

Here's how the system works: After repairs are made, OG&E work crews, or dispatchers, will determine if a callback is necessary. If so, only the customers who called to report the outage will receive a telephone call prompting them to press "1" to verify that their power has been restored or "2" if they are still without electricity.

Dukeman said the system recognizes voice response for customers without a touchtone telephone and is also available in Spanish.

Online outage information

Visit OG&E's System Watch™ at www.oge.com. System Watch has outage information, updates on restoration efforts and tips to observe during outages.

OGE Energy Corp. is the parent company of OG&E, Oklahoma's largest electric utility. OG&E serves 700,000 customers in Oklahoma and western Arkansas in a service area that spans 30,000 square miles.

For the third year, OG&E has earned the electric utility industry's highest honor for storm restoration, the Emergency Response Award, given by the Edison Electric Institute.

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