

There are real benefits to being prepared.

Being prepared for any type of event can reduce fear, anxiety, and losses that accompany disasters.

In our 160 square mile service area OUS maintains 1,136 miles of power lines, over 40,000 power poles, 554 miles of water distribution lines, 23,546 water meters, and 4,090 fire hydrants.

A strong commitment from not only utility employees but our 50,000 educated and well prepared customers will ensure minimal impact and fast restoration from disaster.

Knowing what to do and when to do it will help us help you.

Severe Weather Preparation Guide



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BEFORE THE STORM:

Anticipate power outages to be lengthy. Some customers in South Florida were without power for over two months after Hurricane Andrew. We hope never to see that much devastation in Ocala, but please prepare for every eventuality. If you have special medical needs, take the proper steps for preparation NOW.

Learn what each circuit breaker in your home feeds. You will need to be able to turn off sensitive pieces of equipment. Customers may choose to turn off their main circuit breakers. However, when you turn your main circuit breaker back ON, you will want to start with lighting circuits only.

Only qualified electricians should install generators. Generators must be installed according to local codes. If you choose to use a generator and don't have the opportunity to have it properly installed, then use it only to operate individual appliances directly. Do not attempt to power your entire home.

After the storm, Restoration Personnel will **NEED TO GET TO YOUR METER**. To minimize obstructions, please clear the area around your meter prior to the storm. Make sure that you are able to find your emergency lighting supplies in the dark. We tend not to think about things like this until the lights are out.

- Make plans to secure your property. Permanent storm shutters offer the best protection for windows. A second option is to board up windows with 5/8" marine plywood, cut to fit and ready to install. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking.
- Install straps or additional clips to securely fasten your roof to the frame structure. This will reduce roof damage.
- Be sure trees and shrubs around your home are well trimmed.
- Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.

DURING THE STORM:

If a hurricane is likely in your area, you should:

- Listen to the radio or TV for information.
- Establish an out of area relative or friend as your hub for communications and/or evacuation point.
- Secure your home, close storm shutters, and secure outdoor objects or bring them indoors.
- Turn off utilities if instructed to do so or if you have structural damage. Otherwise, turn the refrigerator thermostat to its coldest setting and keep its doors closed.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Avoid using the phone, except for serious emergencies.

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- Ensure a supply of water for sanitary purposes such as cleaning and flushing toilets. Fill the bathtub and other large containers with water.

You should evacuate under the following conditions:

- If you are directed by local authorities to do so. Be sure to follow their instructions.
- If you live in a mobile home or temporary structure—such shelters are particularly hazardous during hurricanes no matter how well fastened to the ground.
- If you live in a high-rise building—hurricane winds are stronger at higher elevations.
- If you live on the coast, on a floodplain, near a river, or on an inland waterway.
- If you feel you are in danger.

If you are unable to evacuate, go to your safe room. If you do not have one, follow these guidelines:

- Stay indoors during the hurricane and away from windows and glass doors.
- Close all interior doors—secure and brace external doors.
- Keep curtains and blinds closed. Do not be fooled if there is a lull; it could be the eye of the storm - winds will pick up again.
- Take refuge in a small interior room, closet, or hallway on the lowest level.
- Lie on the floor under a table or another sturdy object.

AFTER THE STORM:

Before you do anything, *make sure the storm is over.*

Utility Services, or any of our entities, will *never* ask to come into your home.

Our area of responsibility stops outside of your home.

Don't put debris in travel ways or around power poles.

Keep your pets secure and away from access to power facilities.

Don't touch any downed lines.

Don't approach utility personnel for general questions.

If the damage is widespread, please wait several hours before reporting your power out.

You need not call more than once. Calling in multiple times ties up our resources and hinders our restoration efforts.

Please wait to report non-outage related incidents. The time to report a limb hanging over your power lines or a street/yard light out is NOT during restoration efforts.

In the event of *any structural damage*, Building Inspectors will need to approve any reconnection of individual service.

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THE POWER RESTORATION PROCESS:

We would like to inform our customers that DURING THE STORM, the crews don't work. Wind speeds (including gusts) of thirty miles per hour prohibit us from working safely. A single gust of wind can overturn our equipment.

As soon as it is safe, we will begin to assess damage. Power starts at a generation station and then goes through various steps before reaching your home. The system is complex and interweaving. This interweaving is what makes it possible for your neighbor to have power, while you are still in the dark.

In order to make our restoration efforts efficient, it is important that we establish a plan. A brief period of time spent in planning will save us *days* as restoration is completed. Ocala Utility Services has approximately 50,000 customers and it would be impractical of us to answer the phone when a large percentage of those customers are without power. Be confident that we are reviewing all calls. Our efforts are better spent responding to the calls than returning them.

To be most effective, we must restore power on a customer per man-hour basis. Understand that we have to place a high priority on Public Safety Issues – hospitals and emergency facilities, nursing homes and shelters, sewer lift stations and water treatment facilities. Please do not approach utility personnel during this critical phase. This impedes our progress for all customers. Assessment personnel will prioritize the work and then send in the necessary equipment as soon as practical. It is possible that you will see a tree crew or other support personnel one or more days prior to a construction crew being available.

Any damage to the meter can, wire, and the pipe attached to the home is the responsibility of the customer and must be repaired by an electrician *before* the utility can restore power to your home.

Know that we are doing everything to restore your power, water resources and telecommunications as safely and efficiently as possible.

AFTER YOU HAVE POWER:

Please leave an outside light on for us. This assists us to identify individual problems. Refrain from reporting non-emergency or non-outage related problems for a few more days. There is a great deal of “Temporary” work that takes place during restoration. Though your power may be restored it takes a little longer for our system to be returned to “Normal.”

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THE POWER “GRID” EXPLAINED

We have heard so much about “The Grid” since Frances. A brief description of the power system and its protective devices may help you to understand what “The Grid” means.

Essentially the electrical system is a complex network of interconnected conductors. The neighborhood conductors feed from distribution substations located relatively close to their respective customers. These distribution stations are fed from sub-transmission substations, which are in turn fed from transmission lines that interconnect throughout the state.

We are going to explain a few circumstances and how they apply to distribution circuits. Keep in mind these are simplifications of a complex system.

Protective devices installed on the system can not prevent the initial fault (problem) from occurring. However they are intended to help minimize the amount of damage experienced during the faulted condition and to minimize the number of customers affected.

Distribution circuits have a breaker in the substation that will respond when a fault occurs. Depending on the settings and the type of fault this breaker may open and close several times in an attempt to allow the condition to clear itself before opening up and remaining open. This is the blinking of the lights we occasionally experience. If the fault fails to clear and the breaker remains open this outage will tend to affect 1000 to 3000 customers.

Laterals (lines that are fed from the distribution circuit) have protective devices of their own. If a fault occurs on the lateral its protective device will open. Under that circumstance the distribution circuit will remain functional while the lateral and its downstream customers will be off. These types of outages can affect several hundred customers.

It is not uncommon to have laterals and sub laterals feeding throughout a neighborhood. Each sub lateral having its own protective device allowing for minimizing the number of customers affected by a single incident.

When a circuit outage occurs: A crew is dispatched to ride the circuit to ascertain the cause. Once the cause has been identified the crew leader determines if the damage can be cleared in a relatively quick manner or if the damage needs to be isolated from the system. For instance, a tree limb (limb, not a tree) can usually be cleared from the line in a matter of minutes and the entire circuit is restored to normal at one time. But, a broken conductor or pole will take more than a few minutes to repair. The crew then isolates the damaged area by opening switches on either side of the damage site. Once the damage site is isolated from the system the circuit breaker can be closed back in and usually another switch can be closed to feed the other side of the damage from an alternate

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source. This redirecting of the system will allow us to restore power to a large percentage of the customers on that circuit. At this point our crews can safely make repairs to the damaged area.

When a lateral goes out: Lateral lines aren't intended to have alternate sources the way feeders do. When the crew determines the cause of the outage they will attempt to isolate the damage if possible. Of course there are many variables involved in what can happen and how much a crew can do to restore power to as many customers as possible while they are making repairs to the damaged section.

It is our goal to restore power to as many customers as practical and keep our lines safe for our crews to work.

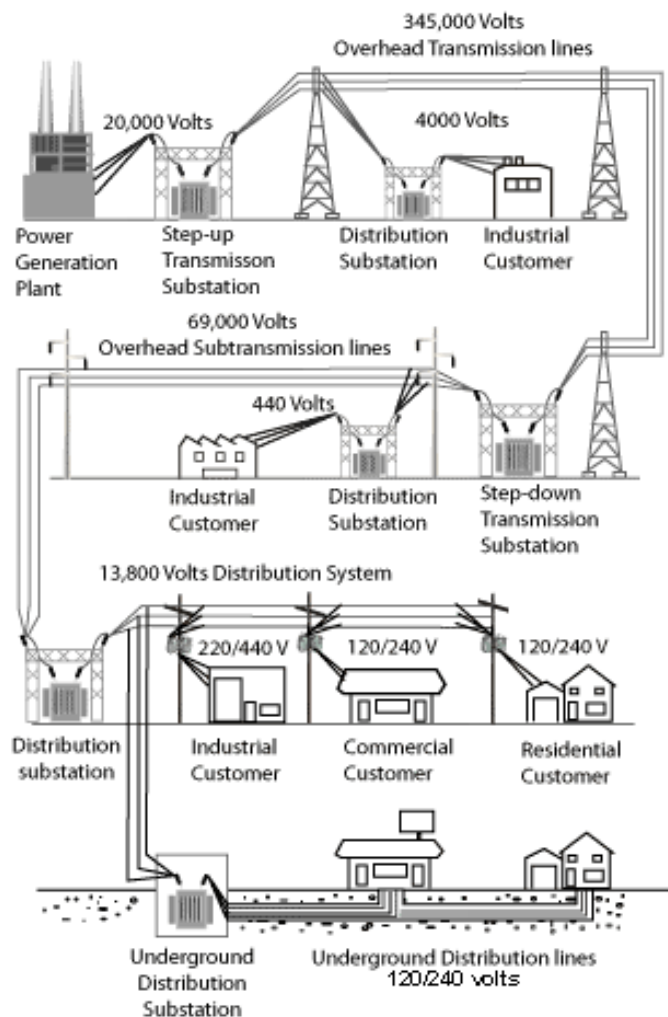


Figure 1. Diagram of the Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution System

CRITICAL GENERATOR SAFETY

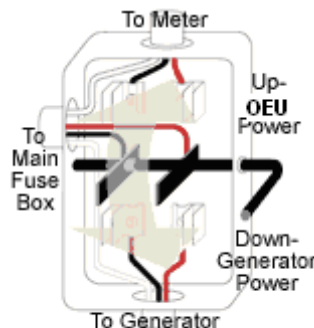


Some customers prepare for the possibility of power outages by buying an electric generator as a standby system to keep lights and appliances' running until service is restored.

A generator may be able to save food in your refrigerator or freezer during a prolonged outage, let you keep your home office running, or power other essential equipment. Generators can be expensive and noisy. They can also pose serious safety hazards to you and to others, so please follow all safety instructions provided by the manufacturer.

The law requires that customers with a permanently installed or portable generator do not connect it to another power source, such as Ocala Utility Services power lines. If you own and operate a generator, you are responsible for making sure that electricity from your unit cannot "backfeed," or flow into power lines. For the sake of safety, be sure to use your generator correctly. If you don't, you risk damaging your property and endangering your life and the lives of line workers who may be working on power lines some distance from your home.

Permanent Standby Generators



When a generator is permanently connected to a customer's electric system, it energizes the building's wiring. This type of installation requires a device that prevents the generator from being connected to power lines. Follow these safety tips:

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- Only a qualified professional, such as a licensed electric contractor, should install a permanent standby generator.
- A double-pole, double-throw transfer switch (see diagram) is the required device to keep your generator from backfeeding into system. The switch also keeps power from re-energizing your house wiring while your generator is running, protecting your generator, wiring and appliances from damage when your service is restored.
- Have all additions to your house wiring inspected by your city or county building department.
- When installation is complete, call Utility Services to let us know about your back-up system. We will make a note in our records to remind our workers of your generator if they are working on an outage in your area. In some cases, line workers may ask to check your electric generator transfer switch for safety.
- If you already have a permanently installed standby generator but you don't know if it's installed properly, call your local building inspector or a licensed contractor for help.

You are responsible for any injuries or damage to your property, your neighbors' or the City of Ocala, from an improperly installed or operated generator.

Portable Generators

Portable generators are designed to be connected only to selected appliances or lamps. These generators never should be connected directly to a building's wiring system.

- Before starting your generator, carefully read and follow all of the manufacturer's instructions.
- Be sure that the total electric load on your generator won't exceed the manufacturer's rating.
- Always locate your generator where its exhaust will vent safely.
- Prioritize your needs. Use the lowest wattage light bulbs that provide a safe level of light, reserving power for additional lighting elsewhere or a small appliance. Remember that the greater the load on your generator, the more fuel it will use.
- Keep cords out of the way so they don't present a tripping hazard—especially in dimly lit doorways or halls. Never run cords under rugs or carpets where heat might build up or damage to a cord may go unnoticed.

Extension cords must be properly sized to carry the electric load. Overloaded cords can overheat and cause fires or damage to equipment.

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Water and Sewer Safety Tips:

Water

When hurricane season approaches, please take time to prepare your home and family for the possibility of dangerous storms affecting City of Ocala. Listed below are some tips that could help before, during and after a storm.

Your City of Ocala water system is a reliable source of safe clean drinking water, and to ensure its quality and reliability during inclement weather, there are redundant pumping systems, emergency generators and storage tanks. While these robust systems do a great job, the weather can cause an interruption in service. The City of Ocala monitors the weather systems in the area and will take appropriate actions to minimize interruptions and do what is required to quickly return services.

Before and during a severe storm here are some tips that you can do too;

- Remember FIRST thing have a plan and work your plan.
- Second DO NOT ASSUME someone else has called your location for assistance. Please call 629-CITY or during emergency call 351-6666.
- If you are on a public water system, know the name of your water company. City of Ocala Utility Services may not be your provider which could delay your utilities response time
- Following an emergency event, if you are worried about the safety of your water supply, use it only for sanitation purposes - to clean your home or flush your toilet - until you know it is safe to drink.
- If there is a problem with your public water supply - radio, TV, and/or newspaper announcements will be made and signs prominently posted in the affected area to advise residents of the problem and what to do about it. If telephone service is available, call and ask your water company about the safety of your water.
- The American Red Cross recommends stocking a minimum three (3) days supply of water for emergencies, with at least one (1) gallon of water per person per day. If you live in a storm or flood prone area, you might be wise to store at least a two (2) weeks supply of water, with three (3) gallons of water per person per day.
 - Remember, until your water is restored, you will have a limited supply of water to cook with - stock emergency food items that need little or no water to prepare. Stock paper plates and cups to save on dish-washing water.
 - Store water in clean, closed containers. Plastic containers are ideal, because they are lightweight and not easily broken. Avoid using metal containers. Be sure containers are clean!
- Tubs and sinks can be cleaned and used to store water. If there is no time to sanitize your tub, fill it with water anyway. Be sure stoppers seal drains securely to prevent stored water from leaking down the drain. Water stored in a tub or sink can be used for bathing or flushing toilets, or disinfected for drinking.
- Maintaining pressure is one way water utilities ensure that your water is free from harmful bacteria. When the pressure is lost, a boil water order may be issued by health authorities.

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- This hurricane season, instead of buying bottled water; invest in plastic water containers for your family.
 - Plastic water containers are available in a variety of sizes and can be stored easily.
 - Make sure you get enough plastic containers so everyone in your family – including your pets – has enough water to last several days. Calculate about one gallon per person per day and you should be okay.
 - When you bring your plastic containers home, don't fill them up just yet. Keeping water stored a long time could attract harmful bacteria and make the water taste stale. Wait until a hurricane warning is announced first.
 - Worried that the container might be “icky” when you fill it? Not a problem. Wash it out with soap and water first, and then rinse it well. Next, fill it with a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented household chlorine bleach – the kind used for laundry – per gallon. Let it sit ten minutes, then pour out the solution and rinse the container well. It's now ready to be filled up with tap water.

If you are not on a public water system and are on a private well here are some tips for you to use;

- If your drinking water comes from a private well that is covered by flood water, do not attempt to use the well until the flood water recedes. When the flood water recedes, pump the well until the well water is clear. Once clear, you may use the well water for house cleaning and flushing. However, contact the [Health Department](#) officials, before drinking or cooking with the well water.
- The American Red Cross recommends stocking a minimum three (3) days supply of water for emergencies, with at least one (1) gallon of water per person per day. If you live in a storm or flood prone area, you might be wise to store at least a two (2) weeks supply of water, with three (3) gallons of water per person per day.
 - Remember, until your water is restored, you will have a limited supply of water to cook with - stock emergency food items that need little or no water to prepare. Stock paper plates and cups to save on dish-washing water.
 - Store water in clean, closed containers. Plastic containers are ideal, because they are lightweight and not easily broken. Avoid using metal containers. Be sure containers are clean!
 - Tubs and sinks can be cleaned and used to store water. If there is no time to sanitize your tub, fill it with water anyway. Be sure stoppers seal drains securely to prevent stored water from leaking down the drain. Water stored in a tub or sink can be used for bathing or flushing toilets, or disinfected for drinking.
- The water in the hot water heater is a potential source of drinking and cooking water in an emergency. If you need the water, turn off the incoming water valve and the power to the water heater. Water may be drawn through the valve found at the bottom of the heater. Before restoring power to the heater, ensure water service has been restored and the heater tank refilled to prevent damage to heating element.

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- Anytime you lose water for longer than two (2) hours, and power remains on, turn off all appliances that draw water - such as ice makers, hot water heaters, heat pumps, etc. - to prevent damage. When water service is restored and you restart your ice maker, discard the first several trays of ice to ensure cubes do not contain sediment from surge water in pipes.
- If you evacuate, turn off appliances which use water and close the main water valve into the house.
- Anytime you are not sure of the purity of your water supply and cannot verify its safety, take precautions and disinfect the water!

Wastewater

Your City of Ocala Wastewater system has been designed to meet necessary standards to reduce problem areas and to ensure the waste is carried away to the appropriate treatment plant. During inclement weather where there are heavy rains and/or lightening, our quality of service can be reduced. To minimize sewer spills or sewer back-ups the city maintains redundant pumping systems, emergency generators, and appropriate pipe sizing. While these systems do a great job, the weather can cause an interruption in service. Here are some tips to help you through the period that your service is not what you expect from us.

- Remember FIRST thing have a plan and work your plan.
- Second DO NOT ASSUME someone else has called your location for assistance. Please call 629-CITY or during emergency call 351-6666.
- If you are on a public sewer system, after a flood or storm, contact your utility company about the use of sewer lines in your area. If there has been an extraordinary amount of rainfall or flooding, sewer systems may be filled to capacity until they can be pumped. You may be asked to reduce sewer use, until the sewer system is stabilized.
- If your utility tells you the main sewer lines are clear, check your toilet (before using it) by flushing. If your toilet is clogged, you may need to clean the sewer line from your house to the main sewer line.
- If your toilet works, but you do not have running water, use pool water or other non-disinfected water for minimal flushing. Save your bottled or disinfected drinking water for drinking!
- If your toilet does not work, use a portable toilet or line your toilet with a plastic garbage bag. After use, tie bags tightly and store in a secure container (such as a garbage can with a tight lid) for later disposal

If you are not on a public wastewater system and are on a private septic tank system here are some tips for you to use;

- If you have a septic system, it will not work if flood water covers the drain field. Wait until the flood water recedes to use your sinks, tubs, toilets, or washing machines that drain into the septic tank.
- If your toilet works, but you do not have running water, use pool water or other non-disinfected water for minimal flushing. Save your bottled or disinfected drinking water for drinking!
- If your toilet does not work, use a portable toilet or line your toilet with a plastic garbage bag. After use, tie bags tightly and store in a secure container (such as a garbage can with a tight lid) for later disposal.

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FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

- Discuss the type of hazards that could affect your family. Know your home's vulnerability to storm surge, flooding and wind.
- Locate the various shelters in your area and arrange for family members to meet there in case of immediate need. Also select a backup shelter as an alternative.
- Locate a safe room or the safest areas in your home for each hurricane hazard. In certain circumstances the safest areas may not be your home but within your community.
- Determine escape routes from your home and places to meet. These should be measured in tens of miles rather than hundreds of miles.
- Have an out-of-state friend as a family contact, so all your family members have a single point of contact.
- Make a plan now for what to do with your pets if you need to evacuate.
- Post emergency telephone numbers by your phones and make sure your children know how and when to call 911.
- Check your insurance coverage - flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance.
- Stock non-perishable emergency supplies and a Disaster Supply Kit.
- Use a NOAA weather radio. Remember to replace its battery every 6 months, as you do with your smoke detectors.
- Take First Aid, CPR and disaster preparedness classes.

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DISASTER SUPPLY KIT

- Water** - at least 1 gallon daily per person for 3 to 7 days
- Food** - at least enough for 3 to 7 days
 - non-perishable packaged or canned food / juices
 - foods for infants or the elderly
 - snack foods
 - non-electric can opener
 - cooking tools / fuel
 - paper plates / plastic utensils
- Blankets / Pillows, etc.**
- Clothing** - seasonal / rain gear/ sturdy shoes
- First Aid Kit / Medicines / Prescription Drugs**
- Special Items** - for babies and the elderly
- Toiletries / Hygiene items / Moisture wipes**
- Flashlight / Batteries**
- Radio** - Battery operated and NOAA weather radio
- Cash (with some small bills)** - Banks and ATMs may not be open or available for extended periods.
- Keys**
- Toys, Books and Games**
- Important documents** - in a waterproof container or watertight plastic bag — insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, etc.
- Tools** - keep a set with you during the storm
- Vehicle fuel tanks filled**
- Pet care items**
 - proper identification / immunization records / medications
 - ample supply of food and water
 - a carrier or cage
 - muzzle and leash

Critical Contact Information

City

Ocala Electric Trouble Reporting	351-6666
Ocala Building Dept. for Inspections	629-CITY (2489)
Ocala Police Department	369-7000
Ocala Fire Rescue Department	629-CITY (2489)
General Information	629-CITY (2489)

County

County Building Dept. for Inspections	438-2400
Sheriff's Office Non-Emergency 24 hr	732-9111
Marion County Parks & Recreation	671-8560

Federal

FMEA	850-224-3314
National Weather Service	904-741-4411

For Emergencies Dial 911