



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 our community, 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.

DURING THE STORM...

Turn off all sensitive equipment at its breaker.

If you suffer **any structural damage**, **TURN OFF YOUR MAIN BREAKER**.

Stay as safe as possible, as sheltered as possible.

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.

THE 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. 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.

To be most effective, we must restore power on a customer per manhour 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.

The meter can, wire, and the pipe attached to the home belongs to the customer. Any damage needs to be repaired by an electrician *before* the utility can restore power to that home.

As you can see, 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. Utility Services has approximately 50,000 customers. 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.

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.”

Know that we are doing everything to restore y our power as safely and efficiently as possible.

Utility Services - Power

Trouble Reporting 351-6666

City Building Dept. for Inspections 629-8421

County Building Dept. for Inspections 620-7422

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 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.

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GUIDELINES TO ENSURE THAT YOUR GENERATOR IS WORKING SAFELY

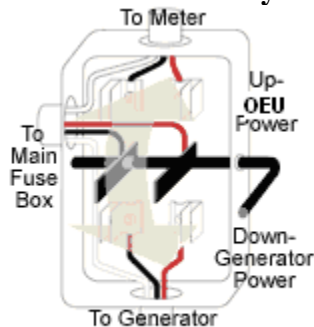


Some customers prepare for the possibility of power outages by buying an electric generator as a standby system to keep lights and appliances running until service is restored.

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 safety's sake, 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:

- 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.

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 located 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.

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 resealable 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