



IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING POWER OUTAGES

June 28, 2010

As a public owned utility, the Sylacauga Utilities Board is committed to keeping our customers informed about issues that affect their electric service. The intent of this notice is to update you on what to expect during a widespread power outage.

Widespread power outages happen occasionally, and in most instances do not last long. Reasons for occasional power failure can include trees falling on power lines, animals coming in contact with energized lines, or a car crashing into a pole. However at times, the problem may be more severe, causing widespread power outages that last from hours to days. Widespread outages can be caused by ice and snow, severe thunderstorms, tornadoes or hurricanes that cause extensive damage.

The Sylacauga Utilities Board is constantly monitoring all incoming phone lines with an automated Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system. Even though you don't speak with a person, you can be certain that all calls are monitored and received by our employees monitoring the system. The system allows Utilities Board personnel to monitor all customer calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Utilities Board now monitors (24) lines (calls) at a time. It is very unlikely that anyone will receive a busy signal with the new system.

When calling to report a problem, we respectfully ask that you listen carefully and follow the instructions provided. This will allow the Utilities Board Employees to dispatch your outage notification to the service crews promptly. To better serve you, make sure that your phone number(s); home and cell numbers, are recorded at the Utilities Board office, and placed in your account information. Most cordless home phones require power to be on to use them. If you use your cell phone to report an outage at your residence, it will be beneficial to the Utilities Board to have your cell number referenced to your account.

If we do not have a record of your phone number, **please leave a brief message regarding your service or type of problem, your name, address, and phone numbers where you may be reached.** The IVR system automatically records the telephone number of every customer leaving a message. Please include **any additional information that you feel is important (i.e. line down, fire, pole broken, tree on line, etc).**

At times, a message on the IVR system may include the areas where it is known that power is out, and the areas where we are currently working during a widespread power outage. Power will be restored in the order as outlined in document referenced in the link below:

<http://www.sylacauga.net/utilities/electric/StepstoRestoringPower.pdf>

You will also be given the option to have a "Call Back" to your phone, upon restoration of service, to insure that your power is indeed back on. We encourage you to use this function. By using this function we can make sure that everyone is back on in the area.

We will work diligently to restore power outages in a timely manner. If you are calling in to report a problem other than a power outage, please listen carefully to the instructions on the recorded menu. Your call will be dispatched to the appropriate service crews.

We pride ourselves in providing you affordable, reliable electric service.

As we work as quickly as possible to get the power back on, there are some steps you can take before, during, and after an outage to make it easier to cope.

- **LIGHT:** Always have alternate sources of light on hand. It could be a flashlight with extra batteries, candles, kerosene, or oil lamps. Keep your alternate light source in an established place where it can be found easily in an outage situation. Please exercise appropriate care and caution when using a light source with an open flame.
- **INFORMATION:** Have a battery-powered radio available. The radio will bring you weather reports, local news bulletins, and other important emergency information. During a widespread outage, the Utilities Board will contact local radio stations about restoration efforts.
- **FOOD:** Stock emergency food and related items along with a manual can opener. Keep your refrigerator/freezer doors closed as much as possible to reduce the chance of food spoilage.
- **MEDICAL:** It is a good idea in any rural setting, and particularly during seasons of potential inclement weather, to keep back-up medical supplies and equipment on hand (medications, insulin, oxygen tank, batteries, etc.)
- **PROTECT YOUR APPLIANCES:** Turn off large appliances that come on automatically and disconnect sensitive equipment such as VCRs, computers and TVs to avoid damage from lightning or a power surge. If all these appliances come back on at once, they might overload your home's electric circuits. Leave a single lamp turned on to let you know when your electric service has been restored.
- **PLAY IT SAFE:** Never touch downed power lines or anything contacting power lines. Although you may see lines that are down, they could still be energized. Never attempt to move trees from power lines. Let qualified servicemen from the Utilities Board or contractors handle the clearing and repair work.
- **CONFIRM THE OUTAGE:** First check lights and appliances in other rooms. If you still have power in some areas, most likely a fuse or a circuit breaker in your house has blown. If all lights are off, check to see if your neighbor's lights are off also. This will help us determine how widespread the outage is. Bear in mind that just because your neighbor has power (and you do not) does not necessarily mean the problem is limited to you. Your power may be on a different feeder line. Be prepared to give as much pertinent information as possible to our dispatchers or automated system:
 - Account Name
 - Location and Address
 - Return Contact Phone Numbers
 - The Problem and Extent
 - Whether on the Medical Attention List (Requires Filing a Doctor's Order in Advance)

After reporting an outage, please do not call again, especially after major storm systems. The number of times a person calls does not result in a faster return of service. Multiple calls only tend to create confusion, tie up the phone line, and delay other calls to report outages, thus slowing down and inhibiting a more focused and efficient response in restoring service. However, if all of your neighbors have their power restored, and your power is still off, please call the Utilities Board again. You may be on a circuit that has not been restored.

When the Power Comes Back ON . . .

- Give the electrical system a chance to stabilize by gradually reconnecting the appliances you previously disconnected. When the power first comes back on, turn on only the essential appliances and wait a few minutes before reconnecting others.
- Check food supplies in the refrigerator/freezer for signs of spoilage. Don't take chances with food you are not sure about. When in doubt, throw it out.

Be Prepared

Prepare a Disaster Supplies Kit:

- Prescription medications and medical supplies
- Bedding and clothing, including sleeping bags and pillows
- Bottled water, battery-operated radio and extra batteries, first aid kit, flashlight
- Car keys and maps
- Documents, including driver's license, Social Security card, proof of residence, insurance policies, wills, deeds, birth and marriage certificates, tax records, etc.

Preparedness

Personal Evacuation Plan:

- Identify ahead of time where you could go if you are told to evacuate. Choose several places - a friend's home in another town, a motel, or a shelter.
- Keep the telephone numbers of these places handy as well as a road map of your locality (alternative routes are often required)
- Stay tuned to local radio or TV stations for evacuation instructions. If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.

Prepare for High Winds:

- Secure anything that could blow away during high winds, such as lawn furniture, trash bins, plant containers, lawn ornaments, etc...

When a Hurricane WATCH Is Issued:

- Stay tuned to local radio or TV stations for current storm information.
- Prepare to bring inside any lawn furniture, outdoor decorations or ornaments, trash cans, hanging plants, and anything else that can be picked up by the wind
- Fill your car's gas tank.
- Recheck manufactured home tie-downs.
- Check batteries and stock up on canned food, first aid supplies, drinking water, and medications.

When a Hurricane WARNING Is Issued:

- Stay tuned to local radio or TV stations for evacuation instructions. If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.
- Complete preparation activities.
- If you are not advised to evacuate, stay indoors, away from windows.
- Stay away from floodwaters. If you come upon a flooded road, turn around and go another way. If you are caught on a flooded road and waters are rising rapidly around you, get out of the car and climb to higher ground.
- Be alert for tornadoes. Tornadoes can happen during a hurricane and after it passes over. Remain indoors, in the center of your home, in a closet or bathroom without windows.

Response after a Hurricane:

- Stay tuned to local radio or TV stations for updates and instructions.
- If you evacuated, return home when local officials tell you it is safe to do so.
- Inspect your home for damage.
- Use flashlights in the dark, do not use candles. Gas leaks are often undetectable and can cause explosions.