

When the lights go out

Keeping the lights on

At Rocky Mountain Power, ensuring dependable service is our priority. We make every attempt to keep the power on. But there are some things we just can't control – like severe weather, accidents and other unpredictable situations. If the lights go out, our crews respond immediately and do everything possible – including working around the clock – to get them back on quickly and safely.

Key causes of power outages

- Trees or branches knocked down by wind, snow or ice onto power lines
- Lightning strikes a transformer or other electrical facilities
- Car accidents where utility poles are knocked over or sway enough to knock the lines together and trip off the circuit
- Equipment overload, especially on hot days when air conditioning is cranked up, or during extremely cold weather when electric heaters are turned on all over the system
- Digging too close to lines or cutting a line
- In-home circuit overload
- Animals contact the lines

Power outage safety

Winter storms and high winds occasionally cause weather-related power outages. There are several precautions you can take to prepare for and respond to outages, should they occur:

- Assemble an outage supply kit before winter weather hits.
Include:
 - flashlights
 - extra batteries
 - battery-powered or wind-up clock and radio
 - bottled water
 - manual can opener
 - ready-to-eat foods such as tuna, energy bars and crackers
- Ensure people using life-sustaining medical equipment who live with you have back-up power in case of an outage.
- Call and report the outage to Rocky Mountain Power at 1-877-548-3768.
- Stay away from downed power lines. Even if the line is not sparking, it could still be dangerous.
- Turn on your porch light switch. After crews complete repairs, they patrol the affected area to see if lights are back on.
- As much as possible, do not open refrigerators and freezers – they will keep food and perishables inside cold for some time if not opened.



The drawing above depicts our priorities during an outage.

1. Dispatch crews
2. Patrol lines and check substations
3. Restore power to the greatest number of people as quickly as possible by clearing transmission lines that serve hundreds of substations.
4. Restore power to substations that convert high-voltage power to levels people can safely use at home.
5. Restore power where it is needed most such as hospitals, police and fire stations.
6. Restore power to concentrated areas through distribution and tap lines. Distribution lines travel from the substations to neighborhoods and serve between 1,000 and 3,000 customers. Tap lines then feed into pockets of 20 to 30 homes.
7. Restore power to individual (typically suburban or rural) homes and businesses. This task usually takes the longest.

