

Outage checklist

- Check all circuit breakers or fuses to help determine if your service outage might be the result of a household problem.
- If you have significant water damage in your home, call an electrician.
- Inspect the area outside your home near the meter. If the meter or any of the piping and wires on the wall of your home or office are gone or look damaged, call an electrician.
- Turn off your major appliances so that you can start them gradually once power is restored to avoid damage to sensitive equipment. Leave a light on so that you know when your power is restored.

If you have completed the checklist and need to report an outage, please click [here](#) .

Outage safety checklist

- Don't operate lanterns, heaters or fuel-fired cook stoves without adequate ventilation.
- Do not burn charcoal indoors because it releases carbon monoxide.
- Always refuel outside, away from flames or sparks.
- Wipe up fuel spills immediately.
- Don't allow children to carry candles or oil lamps around the house. A fall could spell disaster!

Which lines are power lines?

It can be difficult to distinguish between a power, cable or telephone line, so you must regard any down line as energized and potentially dangerous. If there is water near the line, the risk is even greater, since water conducts electricity.

Never touch a downed wire regardless of how harmless it looks! Keep children away from this potential hazard. Call Appalachian Power to report any downed lines or equipment.

What does Appalachian Power do to manage a major storm?

Appalachian Power operations personnel continually monitor national and local weather reports so they are prepared for impending storms. This allows Appalachian Power to work on staffing for restoration efforts even before the storm hits.

During major storm efforts, customer service centers operate in "storm mode," using extra telephone lines and bringing in additional representatives to serve our customers better. They also employ advanced telephone technologies to handle the unusually large volume of customer calls. This technology allows customers to report an outage without speaking to a representative and helps us provide status updates regarding the restoration effort.

Why can't I talk directly with a customer services representative?

During major outages, it is unlikely that you will speak directly with a center representative, due to the high volume of calls associated with a major outage. However, our telephone technologies

will allow you to leave information about your outage. In addition, our communications systems give priority to outage calls dealing with safety concerns -- such as downed power lines - so that they receive service as quickly as possible.

Why can't an agent tell me when my power will be restored?

It is impossible to accurately predict restorations of specific circuits serving particular residences because of the many challenges that restoration workers face. Appalachian Power provides updates approximately every four hours to the local news media so that they can report the status of the overall restoration effort. This information is included on the home page of this site during major storms. [Click here](#) .

What is my best source of information on the restoration effort?

Appalachian Power works hard to update the local news media on the overall progress of restoration efforts affecting the area. Appalachian Power issues informational releases to the news media regarding restoration progress at least three times a day during major power outages. Listening to the radio, or checking this web site via battery-operated web devices are the best ways for you to be informed of storm restoration progress. Be sure to have an emergency kit, equipped with a battery-operated radio and fresh batteries, so you're ready in case of a major power outage. [Click here for more information about emergency kits](#) .

How does Appalachian Power decide which customers to restore first?

Appalachian Power works to restore power using the swiftest and most humane schedule possible. As a result, efforts are staged so that power will initially be restored to hospitals, emergency response agencies, essential Appalachian Power facilities, other public utilities and public shelters. Residential customers are given priority over business and industrial customers and efforts are first targeted toward larger population centers. Then, once these larger areas are mostly restored, most work crews move on to other large affected areas, while some personnel remain behind to complete the critical parts of the restoration.

How does Appalachian Power mobilize crews during major outages?

During a major storm, Appalachian Power calls in workers from portions of American Electric Power's 11-state energy delivery territory to assist local employees. Appalachian Power also enlists the help of personnel from other electric companies through mutual assistance agreements as well as contract workers.

In 2000, American Electric Power workers were honored with the Edison Electric Institute's Mutual Assistance Award for their role in the power restoration effort following Hurricane Floyd as well as holiday storms affecting customers in Virginia and West Virginia. [See the Mutual Assistance Award news release](#) .

How does Appalachian Power prepare for major outages?

Employees at Appalachian Power monitor the weather forecasts via the National Weather Service and local weather communications networks so that they are aware of impending storms. Crews from outside the storm's anticipated path may be called to join the restoration effort - sometimes even in advance of the storm.

How does Appalachian Power handle tree damage?

Appalachian Power contractors conduct tree trimming throughout the year to keep power lines free of limbs and debris. Following a storm, these contractors must remove fallen trees and limbs from electrical equipment that are preventing service restoration. This forestry work is a major component of the restoration effort. However, Appalachian Power contractors do not remove storm debris and move the debris only if this is necessary to facilitate the restoration effort.

Do not attempt to remove tree limbs or debris yourself if it is within 10 feet of a power line and stay completely away from any downed power line or sparking equipment. If you notice downed lines or sparking equipment, please call us at the number on your electric bill as soon as possible.

For tree removal, you will need to call a landscape or tree contractor.

Why would Appalachian Power trucks pass by my house without repairing anything?

This can happen because work needs to be done at a nearby location before service can be restored to you and your neighbors.

Why can my home be the only one on the block without power?

Fuses or circuit breakers in your home could have tripped and halted power. Tree limbs could have fallen on the line serving your home. Fuses on the transformer that serves your home may have tripped or could be damaged, and the primary line feeding the transformer could be damaged.

What if I only have electricity in one part of my house?

You could have tripped a circuit breaker, or there could be a blown fuse or a broken connector or wire at one of the service leads to your house. Sometimes damage to these leads leaves only the 120-volt outlets (or some of them) working. In this case, larger appliances that need 240-volt service - such as water heaters, air conditioners and ovens - may be inoperable until repairs are made. It is safe to use the outlets you have available, while you check with an electrician. However, if part of your lights are extremely bright or extremely dim, you should avoid using outlets connected to these circuits to avoid potential damage to equipment. If it is a problem with a service lead to your home, Appalachian Power crews will repair the wires when they arrive to restore service.

Backup generators

Some customers use backup or standby generators to provide power during outages. Appalachian Power needs to be aware of backup generators because of safety hazards they can pose to line workers -- and to you as well.

The problem arises when power from the backup generators feed power onto distribution lines, which can electrocute personnel working on the lines. On the other hand, power from Appalachian Power lines can feed into the generator and cause a fire at your residence. To avoid these hazards, be sure to have your generator installed by an electrician and be sure that it has a manual transfer switch to isolate the device from the power grid. Remember that appliances can be connected directly to the generator independent of the household wiring. Make sure that all

manufacturers' instructions are followed and that only the recommended number of appliances are plugged into the generator. [Click here for more information on backup generators](#) .

Why do I sometimes experience brief outages that call for resetting of appliances?

These outages occur when protective devices, called reclosers, operate. When a recloser detects an object interfering with a line, they de-energize the line briefly to determine if the interference is prolonged or if it is simply a momentary problem. If the recloser determines that the interference was temporary, the line will re-energize. If the interference is detected to be prolonged, the recloser will de-energize the line.