

BELFALLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

P.O. Box 598 · Rosebud, TX 76570 · Phone (254) 583-7955

Thunderstorms May Cause Outages— But We Know How To Respond



Around here, thunderstorms that pack a wallop with lightning and heavy winds can cause outages on our electric system. This is particularly true if tree branches come into contact with electric lines. And we all know the potential damage lightning can inflict when it strikes.

“Outage” is a word none of us in the electric utility industry likes to hear. Whether caused by severe weather, wind or lightning, vehicle accidents, or critters sticking their noses in electrical equipment, outages happen and are usually beyond our control.

Restoring power after a major outage often involves several steps, each strategically planned to restore power safely to the greatest number of members in the shortest time possible (as well as to those who depend on electricity for life support), so if you see your neighbor’s power restored before yours, be assured that it’s not personal. There is a strategic process to power restoration.

Step 1. Transmission lines rarely fail, but severe weather can damage them. One high-voltage transmission line may serve thousands, so if there is damage, it gets attention first.

Step 2. Local distribution substations are checked next when major outages occur. There could be a failure

in the transmission system supplying the substation; however, if the problem can be corrected at the substation, power may be restored to a large number of people.

Step 3. Main distribution supply lines are checked if the problem isn’t at the substation. Substation lines supply towns, housing developments or a group of customers. When power is restored at this level, all customers served by this supply line could have power restored if there are no problems farther down the line.

Step 4. Distribution lines carry power to utility poles or underground transformers outside houses or other buildings. Line crews repair the remaining outages based on restoring service to the greatest number of customers.

Step 5. Occasionally, your power may be out when your neighbor has power. This is sometimes caused by damage to the service line between your house and the transformer on the nearby pole.

We, at Belfalls Electric Cooperative, want to caution everyone to be mindful of the electrical hazards these storms can leave in their wake. Please follow this advice to avoid serious injury or electrocution after a major storm:

- Stay away from downed power lines and be alert to the possibility

that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. Treat all downed or hanging power lines as if they are energized. Warn others to stay away as well, and contact us immediately.

- If you use electric yard tools in clean-up efforts after a storm, do not operate them if it’s raining, the ground is wet, or you are wet or standing in water. Keep all electric tools and equipment at least 10 feet away from wet surfaces or objects.

- If you can’t reach your breaker box safely, or if you have any fallen limbs or debris on power lines near your house, call us immediately.

- Before operating a standby generator, make sure a transfer safety switch is used. This prevents electricity from traveling back through the power lines, known as “backfeed.” Backfeed creates danger for anyone near power lines, particularly crews working to restore power.

Remember that when reporting an outage, it saves time if you can give us your account number, meter number or street address.

If we’re lucky, Mother Nature will let us enjoy our May flowers—and spare us from any severe weather this spring. However, please be assured that, at your electric cooperative, we try to be prepared for whatever weather conditions may come our way.

LAUNDRY DAY CONSERVATION TIPS

Before we had the convenience of electric washers and dryers, laundry day was quite a chore, requiring a great deal of physical energy. With today's appliances, that physical load has been reduced substantially as we allow electricity to perform the majority of the labor. But there's no reason to have laundry day consume any more kilowatt-hours of energy than necessary to get the job done. Here are some tips to help keep the load on your meter at a minimum.

CLOTHES WASHERS

- Follow detergent instructions carefully. Adding too much detergent actually hampers effective washing action and may require more energy in the form of extra rinses.
- Set the washing machine temperature to cold or warm and the rinse temperature to cold as often as possible.
- Wash only full loads of clothing, but do not overload the machine.
- Sort laundry and schedule washes so that a complete job can be done with a few cycles of the machine carrying its full capacity, rather than a greater number of

cycles with light loads.

CLOTHES DRYERS

A typical home uses 360 to 1,400 kilowatt-hours per year to operate the clothes dryer. To become more energy efficient with your laundry, follow these tips:

- Hang your laundry outside when weather permits.
- Clean the lint filter thoroughly after each use.
- Dry towels and heavy cottons in a separate load from lighter-weight fabrics.
- Avoid over-drying. This not only wastes energy, but harms the fabric as well.
- Run dryer loads back-to-back to take advantage of the heat that is already in the dryer.

BUYING TIPS

If you're in the market for a new washer or dryer, consider these suggestions:

- Look for a clothes washer with several water level options (to adjust

to different loads). Also, look for pre-soaking and suds-saver options.

- Consider using a front-loading or horizontal axis washing machine.
- Look for laundry appliances with automated moisture sensors to reduce drying time.
- Look for the energy-efficiency label and compare consumption. Brands with the Energy Star logo are good choices.



Statement of Nondiscrimination

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The person responsible for coordinating

this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Joe W. Marek, general manager. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from, and/or file a written complaint with this organization; or the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Stop 1510, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-1510; or the Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410; or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

IN EMERGENCIES

To report power failures after business hours, call:

(254) 583-7955

If no answer, call:

- Kenneth Fikes (254) 583-4556
- Larry Koslosky (254) 583-4555
- Doug Matous (254) 583-2957
- Bobby Skala (254) 583-7219
- Jeremy Tepe (254) 583-2557
- Jake Willis (254) 583-0191
- Ernest Martin (254) 583-2219
- Joe W. Marek (254) 583-4016
- James Campbell . . . (254) 583-2786