



Power Outage Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Q. What causes outages?

A. Although we are committed to providing you the most reliable electric possible, 24 hours a day, every day, events that are out of our control sometimes occur. Car accidents. Lightning. High winds. Winter storms. Whatever its cause, when an outage occurs, we do our best to restore power as quickly as possible.

2. Q. Why do I have to call you? Don't you know when an outage occurs?

A. Our technology helps us identify when large blocks of customers are without power, but it does not tell us where individual outages occur. Your call to our Outage Reporting Line, 1-888-LIGHTSS (1-888-544-4877) provides more detailed information about the outage than we could otherwise obtain. We count on your help, and we thank you for your assistance.

3. Q. If I report a downed wire, will my power be restored more quickly?

A. Not if a downed wire is not the problem. If your power goes out, do not report a downed wire unless you actually see one at your location. Do not assume that the trouble is a downed wire somewhere, because outages can be caused by a variety of problems.

During an outage, downed wire reports are given high priority to ensure public safety. Where a downed wire is reported, a hazard responder (not a repair crew) shows up first to assess the situation.

Once public safety is assured, the hazard responder moves on to the next reported location. Only then does the line crew come to fix the problem.

If there is no downed wire at a location where one has been reported, this only slows down our power restoration efforts. Each downed line report must be assessed by a hazard responder before repairs can be made. Time spent at an incorrectly reported location is wasted, so that finding and correcting the real problem takes that much longer.

The bottom line is, if you see a downed wire, report a downed wire. Otherwise, if your power is out, just report your power is out. You will help us restore everyone's power more quickly.

4. Q. What happens when I call the FirstEnergy Outage Reporting Line, 1-888-LIGHTSS (1-888-544-4877)?

A. Our automated phone system reads the phone number from which you call and uses that number to look up your account record. From your account record, your address is automatically entered into a computer program that sorts outage calls by location.

(Note: If you have moved recently, or if you most likely will call using a number other than one associated with your account - such as a cell phone - please [update your account information](#) accordingly.)

Based on the outage information collected, our dispatchers determine where to send crews from our service centers to restore power. Sometimes a dispatcher can give an exact problem and location, but other times a service crew must survey an area to find the reason for the outage. Once the problem is corrected, the service crew notifies the dispatcher that it is ready for the next assignment.

5. Q. When I call your outage number, why doesn't it just connect me to a Customer Service Representative?

A. Our automated Outage Reporting Line is designed to handle the large volume of calls that occur during a widespread outage. Although our Contact Center representatives are ready to handle your questions regarding your electric service, our automated outage line can simultaneously handle many more calls than can our Contact Centers - which helps us help you faster during an outage.

6. Q. Why does it sometimes seem to take so long to restore my power?

A. When damage is widespread - such as after a severe storm - it may be impossible to restore electric service to everyone at the same time. In such cases, we give priority to hospitals, police and fire departments, water systems, and communication facilities. After that, we make repairs based on restoring power to the greatest number of customers in the shortest time. Sometimes your circuit may be among the first repaired, and other times not. When there is a delay in restoring your power, we appreciate your patience.

7. Q. Why can't a Contact Center representative tell me exactly when my power will be restored?

A. Widespread damage from a severe storm may make it impossible to accurately predict when a particular customer's power will be restored - especially in the early phases of an outage, while the extent of damage is being assessed. Once the extent of damage is understood, restoration times are affected by the degree of damage to our facilities. High-voltage transmission lines must be given first priority because they supply electricity to the entire distribution system. Substations are repaired next in order to energize local distribution lines. A distribution line serving a local area may have multiple damage locations, all of which must be found and repaired.

All these factors affect our ability to predict when a specific customer's power will be restored.

8. Q. What is my best source of information on FirstEnergy's operating companies' restoration efforts?

A. FirstEnergy regularly updates local news media on outage restoration efforts. Listening to the radio is one way to stay informed of our progress after a storm. Updated information also may be available by calling our Outage Reporting Line, 1-888-LIGHTSS (1-888-544-4877).

If you have reported your outage, you also can get an update on restoration efforts affecting your location by calling us back at 1-888-LIGHTSS (1-888-544-4877).

9. Q. Why did a service truck go through my neighborhood without stopping to restore my power?

A. Service crews often must first tackle public safety hazards and repairs that restore power to hospitals or police and fire departments. A truck may have passed your home on the way to one of these high-priority assignments.

10. Q. Why did my power come back on, then go off again a few minutes later?

A. Restoring power to your home is a complex and dangerous job. Sometimes, after a line is repaired in one location, other damage causes the line to go out again. At other times, it may be necessary to turn off your power once more to safely repair other problems. In any case, our crews work to restore your power again as soon as safely possible. If your power comes back on, then goes off again, please let

us know by calling our Outage Reporting Line, 1-888-LIGHTSS (1-888-544-4877).

11.Q. Can I use a portable generator to produce electricity for my home during an outage?

A. Yes, but please follow the manufacturer's directions.

12. Q. Why does my power sometimes blink in a momentary outage, so that my digital clocks need reset?

A. Most distribution lines are protected by special devices called breakers and reclosers. They not only cut off power when a permanent fault such as a downed line occurs, they also sense momentary faults - such as when a tree limb falls on a line and creates a brief short circuit - and, after a short time, they reclose and re-energize the circuit. If the tree limb has fallen clear of the line, as frequently happens, the short-circuit condition no longer exists and the line will stay energized. When this occurs, there is a momentary loss of power (typically less than a few seconds) to the customers on that circuit.

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

A. Power comes into your house through a piece of electrical equipment called the service panel. From your home's service panel, electricity is routed through individual circuits to different parts of the house. Each circuit is protected by a circuit breaker or fuse. The first thing, when you have power in some circuits but not others, is to [check whether a circuit breaker is tripped](#) or a fuse is blown.

If your breakers or fuses are okay, there is another possibility. Most houses are supplied with electricity through three wires. If one of the wires breaks or becomes damaged, you may have power only in

some circuits, and heavy-duty electric appliances - such as air conditioners, hot water heaters, clothes dryers, or ranges - may not operate. In that case, call our Outage Reporting Line, 1-888-LIGHTSS (1-888-544-4877).

14.Q. Do you reimburse for food loss or damaged equipment during an outage?

A. Outages due to weather are beyond our control, and although we attempt to restore power as quickly and safely as possible, extensive damage can take several days to repair. Unfortunately, FirstEnergy does not reimburse customers for equipment damaged or food lost during a weather-related outage. Customers should contact their renters or homeowners insurance carrier to determine if their policies cover such losses.

15.Q. Do I receive a credit on my electric bill for the time I was without power?

A. You are only charged for the amount of electricity you use. During the time your service was interrupted your meter did not register electric usage and you will not be charged for any consumption.