

Steps to getting the lights back on

Clark Public Utilities works year-round to build and maintain the most robust and resilient electric system possible, but when hit with extreme weather, power outages can occur. Because electrical systems are built in circuits, repairs to damage during a widespread outage must be prioritized to restore power to the largest number of customers first. This illustration helps show the steps your utility follows to bring the lights back on after a big outage. The key to getting your power back on as quickly as possible is to report the outage using the automated PowerLine system at 360-992-8000. Without a report, we may not know your power is out and cannot include your home or business in our restoration plans.

Step 2:

Transmission lines deliver power to substations and, when damaged, can disrupt power to tens of thousands of customers. Repairs to these lines must come first.

Step 1:

While outage repairs are prioritized based on the number of customers affected, the top concern is always public safety. In the event of a hazardous situation, a Clark Public Utilities serviceman will respond and secure the scene as quickly as possible to protect the public from danger. Other areas of the system may still need to be repaired before power is restored, but always alert the utility in the event of a downed line, fire or other emergency situation so we can make it safe immediately.

Step 3:

Substations distribute power to several thousand customers. When a major outage occurs, substations in the affected area are checked first. When a problem can be solved at the substation level, power can be restored to several neighborhoods at once. Sometimes, power can be rerouted to customers from a different substation while a repair is made.

Step 4:

Feeder lines leave substations and carry power to neighborhoods and business areas. If a problem can be solved at the feeder level, more than a thousand customers can be restored at once as long as there aren't additional problems further down the line.

Step 5:

Once power has been restored at the transmission, substation and feeder line levels, crews get to work making repairs to primary lines that directly serve between five and 30 customers. A home or a business may be affected by a fallen tree nearby, but if there is a problem on the feeder line as well, it must be fixed before the tree can be cleared and power can be restored. Otherwise, the energy just can't get to its final destination.

Step 6:

Sometimes storms can cause problems that affect only one home or business. These repairs are made last but some customers may have work to do before the utility can restore power. If there is damage to the building's weatherhead, the piece of equipment that attaches an overhead power line to the home or business, that must first be repaired by a licensed electrician and inspected by the utility. Equipment on your home or business is not owned by the utility and cannot be repaired by utility crews. It's also the case that the utility may not know about outages affecting a single home or a handful of homes. It's important that all outages be reported via the automated PowerLine system so we can get your lights back on as quickly as possible - 360-992-8000.

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