

Electricity - you don't realize how much you rely on it until it isn't available. The ice storm that shocked our community caused one of the largest power outages experienced by Harrison REMC members and employees. Many people were taken by surprise and weren't prepared for the consequences of a power outage of this magnitude.

For everyone, whether a member without power or an employee working on restoring power, the storm was a good reminder of the power of nature, and the impact it can have on our lives.

Lessons can be learned from this storm, and hopefully these lessons will help everyone be better prepared for the next major weather event that impacts electrical service.

Following below are some critical issues that everyone needs to address to be prepared for possible outages:

1. **Make sure your contact information on file at the co-op is correct.**

Do we have the right phone number to reach you? Do we have your cell phone number? Do we have an emergency contact number? As we attempted to reach members to verify power restoration issues, we quickly learned that many of the numbers we have on file in our system are no longer correct. **For safety reasons, it is vital that we have correct contact information for our members.** A form to update your member information is in this issue of *Electric Consumer*. The form can be returned to the co-op with your payment. We strongly urge you to fill out the form and return it to the REMC so we can update your member file.

2. **Be prepared for outages, especially if you have special needs individuals in your household.**

Do you have a supply kit with items needed for the care of a special needs individual, such as infants, elderly, or disabled family members? Is special food needed? Do you have a supply of prescription medication available? Do you have a reserve supply of diapers, wipes and formula? You should always have a back-up supply of necessities available. If there is an individual in the household who relies on electricity for oxygen or other medical equipment, be sure to have a back-up generator available. If it appears an outage could last for several days, make sure you have an alternate arrangement made for the temporary care and housing of special needs individuals.

3. **Have an emergency outage kit available.**

Some key items will help make you more comfortable for the duration of the outage. Do you have a battery-powered radio or TV available? This will keep you in touch with outage status and weather news that could impact you. Do you have a supply of non-perishable food, a manual can opener, and bottled water? It is important to eat during a power outage to help your body generate energy, which generates body heat. Have a supply of bottled water, and drink it regularly to avoid dehydration. Have a first aid kit, a flashlight and supply of batteries, know where to find extra blankets, and layer your clothing. Keeping your head covered will help you maintain internal body heat, so wear a hat.

4. **Once your outage has been reported, please refrain from calling in more than once each day to check on when your power will be restored. Instead tune into local radio stations for updates.**

The volume of calls coming in to Harrison REMC's call center when power outages occur can be enormous. Many people had trouble getting through because of the sheer volume of calls. During the ice storm the REMC experienced a phone system programming issue during the restoration period. This programming issue was allowing two lines to ring unanswered. We apologized and this issue has since been resolved. CSR's reported taking numerous calls from some members who were anxious to learn when their power would be restored. If you are not staying at your

home make sure you keep your answering machine on. This allows you a way to determine when your power is restored, just call and if the machine picks there is power. To help lower call volume, and allow more people to get through to report their outages, the co-op would appreciate it if you do not call more than once a day to report or check on an outage. Media updates will be sent to radio stations WHAS AM, WOCC AM and WAMZ FM on a regular basis to keep members apprised of the outage situation. We update our website many times during the day to keep those internet users updated as well.

5. **Please refrain from following line crews as they work on restoring outages.**

Co-op employees know that all members are anxious to have their power restored as soon as possible, and we make every attempt to do just that. However, following line crews to attempt to get them to speed up their efforts can actually cause a delay in the repair process. Because of the way the electric grid is structured, even though a work crew may be near a home, it may not be able to do a repair because the home is on a different circuit. Operations staff at the co-op work hard on routing line crews in the most efficient, expedient manner possible. There also may be safety considerations if the crews are dealing with downed power lines. For your own safety, and the safety of Harrison REMC employees, please stay away from work crews as they work on repairs.

6. **Know what your responsibilities are, and what responsibilities belong to the co-op, for power restoration.**

Harrison REMC is responsible for the line to your home or business, up to the point of entry to the house. The point of entry into the house, however, is the customer's responsibility. If a branch should fall and break the apparatus by which a power line connects to the house, Harrison REMC will roll up the fallen cable, but the member must hire an electrician to replace the entrance apparatus before the line can be reconnected by the co-op linemen. By being aware of this, a member can take steps to get an electrician to their home for the appropriate repairs so power can be restored by the linemen.

7. **Do not enter substations; do not touch transformers, meter points, downed lines or circuits; do not attempt to trim trees around power lines.**

All of these situations can present dangerous situations which could result in death. Please leave all of these areas alone. Co-op linemen will get to repairs as soon as possible. It is not worth risking your life to attempt to solve an electrical outage on your own.

8. **When using a generator, please exercise caution to avoid back feed onto co-op lines.**

Using a generator can cause back feed onto electric lines. This can result in danger for linemen working on lines to restore power. Investing in a generator transfer switch is the best way to provide emergency power to your property. With a transfer switch, extension cords are not needed since power is provided to the existing outlets. A transfer switch also provides safety to your family, and to our linemen, by disconnecting your wiring from the power grid. Consult with your electrician about installing a switch. Also, always run a generator outside and do not fuel it when it is hot.

9. **When power outages occur, please know that the co-op is doing everything possible to restore power as quickly as possible to all members.**

Providing reliable, affordable service to you is our top priority. We continue to work on improvements to make the Harrison REMC system as highly efficient as possible, and to provide

you with consistent service. However, during storms that impact the entire county, we appreciate the patience of our members as we work to restore outages. Our order of restoration is as follows, and is designed to get service back to as many members as possible, as quickly as possible:

- a. Harrison REMC substations
- b. Three-phase power lines
- c. Single-phase power lines
- d. Individual locations

10. Refrain from excessive load to avoid other outages

In order to aid the REMC in getting power restored please turn off any breakers that you will not need immediately once power is restored. Some examples are, water heater, extra lights, TV's and computers. This helps when power is turned on; the load isn't as large which can be too much for the system and cause another outage.

On behalf of all Harrison REMC employees, we thank you for your patience and support shown during this difficult outage, and we also thank you for your ongoing support and involvement as a member of Harrison REMC.

Please fill out and return to Harrison REMC to update your file.

Name _____

Address _____

Cell Phone _____ Home Phone _____

E-mail Address _____