



Oncor Storm Restoration Questions/Answers

Oncor understands that electricity is an essential service to today's businesses and homes, and loss of power places a significant burden on everyone. Oncor performs a number of planned maintenance activities throughout the year to ensure high levels of reliability. Regardless, Mother Nature and other uncontrollable forces will cause service interruptions from time to time.

Oncor goes to great lengths to make sure we are ready to respond and restore service when outages occur. Oncor has developed formal emergency response plans and routinely conducts drills to ensure our employees and partners are ready when the time comes. Oncor maintains a sufficient staff of highly trained professional line workers that are the first responders in such events. Oncor also maintains agreements with contractors and other utilities for additional resources that can be called upon when the need arises.

While Oncor takes great pride in providing reliable service, we are prepared to respond when the inevitable happens and service is interrupted.

1. What is the process for getting the lights back on after a storm?

Oncor, like most utilities, has a proven plan for restoring power. Oncor follows a straightforward system. First, power is restored to critical emergency services such as sewer and water processing plants, police and fire stations and hospitals. Next, crews work to ensure power lines affecting the largest number of homes and businesses are repaired. Finally, Oncor workers make repairs in neighborhoods, restoring service line by line. This system is logical, tested and effective.

Sometimes consumers will remark that Oncor trucks are nowhere to be found. Or, they say that trucks drive through their neighborhoods, but they don't stop. The truth is Oncor crews may be working miles from a home or business to fix a major power line that brings electricity to that neighborhood. Trucks driving through neighborhoods without stopping could be part of Oncor's damage evaluation process. Oncor has a team of workers who scout for storm damage and report back to a central command center. The information collected by damage evaluators helps Oncor decide how many workers are needed to complete repairs and where they should be sent. This system ensures an efficient and effective response to power outages. It's also possible the truck could be performing other duties not related to storm restoration.

Oncor's process is consistent from one storm to the next, no matter what the size or scope. The only difference is in larger, more extended power outages; Oncor then goes to a central command center to streamline response. Also in major storms, Oncor may seek assistance from contractors or other utilities to speed repairs.

Oncor monitors the weather continuously to prepare for bad weather. Operations centers in various locations in the Oncor service area have specialized services, such as lightning strike tracking and weather radar, to help anticipate when storms may cause extensive damage.

2. When will our lights be back on?

Unfortunately, Oncor can't predict exactly when the lights will be back on. Each storm is unique and carries its own set of challenges. A lot depends on how much damage has been done to Oncor's power lines and equipment and whether the storms move through the area quickly or linger.

In the early stages of storm restoration, Oncor focuses on lines that serve critical emergency services and large numbers of homes and businesses. Once these lines are restored, progress is slower because the number of customers restored with each repair is smaller. For example, Oncor may be able to restore thousands of homes served by a single line with one repair. Homes still without power may require additional repairs, which could take more time.

3. Why is the power across the street always on when mine is off?

Your neighbors may have electric service when you don't because their home is on a different set of lines or circuit. If you can envision the electric grid as an immense version of your house, you may be able to understand what's happening. When a breaker trips in your home, power may be on in the bathroom, but not in the kitchen. That's because your house has more than one circuit. One circuit is off while the others are on. Circuits in neighborhoods work much the same way. As Oncor works through the restoration process, some areas may have less damage than others. Once major lines serving a neighborhood are repaired, power may be on at some houses and off at others because of damage. Until the power is turned back on, Oncor won't know exactly where additional repairs are needed.

4. What caused my lights to go out?

Power can go out for a number of different reasons. Some of the most common causes of power outages are lightning, trees and wildlife. The most helpful step consumers can take is to report power outages by calling the number on their electric bill. Without a phone call, Oncor may not know if the power is out at your home.

With the completion of Oncor's Advanced Meter System (AMS) deployment in 2012, consumers shouldn't have to make that call but it never hurts to call to be sure Oncor knows your power is out. Because Oncor will be monitoring electricity use every 15 minutes, Oncor should be able to more easily locate power outages and determine where

to send crews to make repairs. To check when your area will receive an advanced meter, visit www.smarttexas.com.

Oncor is also a leader in the use of grid automation. Oncor has pioneered new devices that can anticipate potential outages and report them, as well as switch power from one line to another in the blink of an eye. In combination with Oncor's advanced meter systems, Oncor's groundbreaking work with automation helps anticipate and prevent outages, as well as report them automatically when they occur, resulting in better service and reliability for consumers. Oncor has installed close to 500 distribution automation devices in various locations.

Until it's possible for Oncor to monitor electric service around-the-clock, the fastest way to get the power back on is to call the number on your electric bill to report the outage. Keep your electric bill handy, along with an emergency storm kit with food, water, flashlight, crank radio and other supplies. An example of a storm safety kit can be found at www.oncor.com/safety.

5. Why does my electricity go off every time it rains or the wind blows?

If that is indeed happening, it's possible trees may be coming into contact with power lines serving your neighborhood. Trees touching power lines are among the top four reasons for power outages, year after year along with lightning, wildlife and vehicles hitting poles. Oncor prunes trees year-round to try to reduce or prevent outages.

Also, trees often complicate and delay storm restoration. When the wind blows, trees and power lines may become entangled and fall to the ground. Tree trimming crews must be called to cut away limbs and branches first so that electric crews can then safely reset poles and re-hang electric wire.

Oncor's obligation as a regulated utility is to ensure the delivery of safe and reliable electric service. Tree pruning is essential to ensure Oncor can meet its responsibility to the public.

Because Oncor is among the most reliable electric utilities in the nation, it may seem that power outages are more frequent than they really are. Oncor is in the top 25 percent of all electric utilities nationwide, based on nationwide benchmarking that compares the number, frequency and length of power outages. In fact, Oncor's record is excellent. Power is on more than 99.9 percent of the time in the area Oncor serves.

6. When will Oncor upgrade or change out the facilities in our neighborhood?

Oncor focuses on two main areas when conducting maintenance: vegetation management and main line maintenance. Trees, plants, and other vegetation have the greatest impact on outages and consequently customer satisfaction. Oncor also strives to do inspections, treatment and replacement of poles and maintain hardware and feeders on a reliability-based schedule.

Oncor is a leader in the use of automation, a rapidly developing area that relies on technology to improve reliability and service. Among the innovative devices now operating on Oncor's system are smart switches that re-route power to shorten or even prevent power outages. Oncor has installed a series of smart switches that communicate wirelessly to re-route power from one line to another when there is a fault on the line. You may experience a brief outage when the switches move power from one line to another, but nothing else.

7. What else is Oncor doing to improve reliability?

In addition to routine, planned maintenance, Oncor is investing in new technologies that will greatly improve our ability to monitor and control the delivery system. These so-called "Smart Grid" technologies will enable Oncor to respond quicker to outages, and may even help identify developing issues before they cause outages.

A good example is Oncor's Advanced Meter System (AMS). When this system is fully installed, Oncor will be monitoring power to your meter continually. Oncor will know when your power goes out – even if you aren't home to report it. This technology will also help us to more easily locate power outages and determine where to send crews to make repairs. Oncor's AMS project will be complete in 2012. To check when your area will receive an advanced meter, visit www.smarttexas.com.

Oncor is also a leader in the use of grid automation. Oncor has pioneered new devices that can anticipate potential outages and report them, as well as switch power from one line to another in the blink of an eye, restoring service to many customers automatically. In combination with Oncor's advanced meter systems, Oncor's groundbreaking work with automation helps anticipate and prevent outages, as well as report them automatically when they occur, resulting in better service and reliability for consumers. Oncor has installed close to 1,000 distribution automation devices in various locations.

8. Why can't I speak to someone in person when I call about my power outage?

Oncor does handle most calls in call centers. However, reporting a power outage on an electronic system works equally well. The information you input into an automated service is recorded and translated directly into a ticket that shows up in an operations center for handling. These tickets are then assigned to the appropriate crews to work. Automated systems are used to help manage high call volume. Oncor relies on an automated system during storms to ensure everyone who is calling to report an outage can do so.

9. Why does it take so long to get the power back on?

Our No.1 goal is to get everyone's power back on as quickly and safely as possible. Oncor follows a systematic process for assessing damage and assigning crews. If damage is extensive, Oncor regularly brings additional personnel or materials from other areas to speed the restoration process. Sometimes storm damage is so severe that repairs can take several days. After Oncor analyzes the scope of the storm damage, an estimate about the

length of the storm restoration is made public. Everyone should have a contingency plan to cope with extended power outages. This plan may involve re-locating to a friend or family member's house or to a public location, like a library. It's nearly impossible to predict exactly when power will be restored at a particular home or business.

10. Who is responsible for spoiled food in my refrigerator and freezer?

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, a freezer full of food will usually keep for up to 48 hours — if you keep the door closed. Refrigerated food will last from 8 to 12 hours with the door closed and never opened. If the freezer in a refrigerator isn't full, quickly group packages together so they will retain cold more effectively. Separate meat and poultry items from other foods to prevent contamination.

When the power goes off, you may want to put dry ice, block ice or bags of ice in the freezer or transfer food to a friend's freezer until power is restored. Use an appliance thermometer to monitor the temperature. When the power is restored, if food still has ice crystals, or is as cold as if it were in the refrigerator (40 degrees), it's safe to refreeze or use. Discard food if it has been warmer than 40 degrees for more than two hours.

Consumers have options available to them to preserve food during power outages. Oncor's job is to restore power as quickly as possible. The burden to protect food, electrical appliances, wiring and other vulnerable items belongs to the consumer.

11. What can I do to help Oncor restore power more quickly or prevent outages?

- Call in power outages. Don't rely on your neighbor. To report problems, call the number on your electric bill.
- Steer clear of Oncor crews while they are working. Watch for crews working along the roadways and obey all traffic signs and directions around work areas.
- Keep access to electrical equipment clear and free of plants or enclosures.
- Don't try to make repairs to Oncor's system yourself. Leave repairs to the experts.
- Stay away from debris and downed power lines. Call 9-1-1 to report any lines that have fallen to the ground.
- Turn on your porch light to let crews working extended, widespread outages know that your home has power.
- To prevent outages:
 - Report poles that sway in the wind
 - Report broken cross arms or sagging or damaged wire
 - Call 811 before digging to request a line locate for underground equipment
 - To report problems, call the number on your electric bill.