

UNPLANNED POWER OUTAGE

With the amount of heavy rain we've had this summer we thought it would be a good idea to share some helpful tips on how to deal with a unplanned power outage, should one happen. Although our crews would be working hard to restore power during outages, there are ways to get your home ready before an outage occurs.

Maintain an emergency kit - Batteries, flashlights, water, ready-to-eat food, extra battery and chargers for your mobile devices or vehicle phone charger, and keep your fuel tank full.

During A Power Outage

- First, check whether the power outage is limited to your home. If your neighbours' power is still on, check your own circuit breaker panel or fuse box. If the problem is not a breaker or a fuse, check the service wires leading to the house. If they are obviously damaged or on the ground, stay at least 10 meters back and notify your electric supply authority. Keep the number along with other emergency numbers near your telephone.
- If your neighbours' power is also out, notify EQUUS immediately 1-888-627-4011.
- Turn off all appliances and electronic equipment, and turn the thermostat for the home heating system down to minimum to prevent damage from a power surge when power is restored. Also, power can be restored more easily when there is not a heavy load on the electrical system.
- Turn off all lights, except one inside and one outside, so that both you and hydro crews outside know that power has been restored.
- Don't open your freezer or fridge unless it is absolutely necessary. A full freezer will keep food frozen for 24 to 36 hours if the door remains closed.
- Never use charcoal or gas barbecues, camping heating equipment, or home generators indoors. They give off carbon monoxide. Because you can't smell or see it, carbon monoxide can cause health problems and is life-threatening.
- Use proper candle holders. Never leave lit candles unattended and keep out of reach of children. Always extinguish candles before going to bed.
- Listen to your battery-powered or crank radio for information on the outage and advice from authorities.
- Make sure your home has a working carbon monoxide detector. If it is hard-wired to the house's electrical supply, ensure it has a battery-powered back-up.

Protect sensitive electrical appliances such as TVs, computer, and DVD players with a surge-protecting power bar.

After The Power Returns

- Do not enter a flooded basement unless you are sure the power is disconnected.
- Do not use flooded appliances, electrical outlets, switch boxes or fuse-breaker panels until they have been checked and cleaned by a qualified electrician.
- Switch on the main electric switch (before, check to ensure appliances, electric heaters, TVs, microwaves computers, etc. were unplugged to prevent damage from a power surge).
- Give the electrical system a chance to stabilize before reconnecting appliances. Turn the heating-system thermostats up first, followed in a couple of minutes by reconnection of the fridge and freezer. Wait 10 to 15 minutes before reconnecting all other appliances.
- Close the drain valve in the basement.
- Make sure that the hot water heater is filled before turning on the power to it.
- Check food supplies in refrigerators, freezers and cupboards for signs of spoilage. When food begins to defrost (usually after two days), it should be cooked; otherwise it should be thrown out or composted.
- As a general precaution, keep a bag of ice cubes in the freezer. If you return home after a period of absence and the ice has melted and refrozen, there is a good chance that the food is spoiled. When in doubt, throw it out!

Restock your emergency kit so the supplies will be there if needed again!



Tomahawk
Rural Electrification Association

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Newsletter



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

System purchases are currently the subject of a generic proceeding initiated by the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC). In light of this FortisAlberta is not able to submit a proposal to purchase until after the proceeding has been finalized which will most likely not be before our Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) ends with EQUUS. To prepare for how TREA will continue operations after April 30, the Board would like member input on who will be the DSO.

You can expect to find a package in the mail from the TREA in the beginning of September. There will be one package sent out to all eligible voting members, if you do not have a signed contract with the TREA we suggest that you contact the office as soon as possible. In these packages you can expect to find three options going forward. We will provide you with as much information on each option as we possibly can. You will be expected to fill out your choice option card and return it in the stamped addressed envelope provided in the package.

The Board of Directors will use this feedback to make the final decision. Sending this package to you will give you a chance to review it on your own time in the privacy of your own home, without a costly meeting. As stated in the last newsletter, the three options that will be presented to you are:

Option 1 - Complete EDSO (Electric Distribution Service Operator) with Fortis

FortisAlberta Inc would be our EDSO. They would operate and maintain daily operations, as well as Meter Reads, New Service Installs, Yard Light Installs, Meter Upgrades/Downgrades, High Load Moves, Crossing Proximity Requests, Vegetation every three years, and Pole Testing every seven years. We could also pick our own RRO (regulated rate option) provider.

Option 2 - EDSO (Electric Distribution Service Operator) with Fortis and hire our own contractors

Fortis would take care of our day to day maintenance and meter reads and we would hire our own contractors for Vegetation and Construction Services, including but not limited to New Service Installs, Meter Upgrades/Downgrades, Yard light Installs, High Load Moves, Crossing Proximity Requests and Pole Testing. We could also pick our own RRO provider.

Option 3 - EQUUS (A new agreement with EQUUS unlike the current JVA)

EQUUS would be our EDSO. They would operate and maintain daily operations, as well as Meter Reads, New Service Installs, Yard Light Installs, Meter Upgrades/Downgrades, High Load Moves and Crossing Proximity Requests. Vegetation and Pole Changes would remain as they are now, designated sections done every year.

The package will also include a Land Designation section and a comment card. As of 2018 REAs are expected to report which farms are classified as residential and which farms are classified as agricultural.

Please feel free to comment as openly and as honestly as you see fit on the comment card. All comments will be kept confidential!

REGULATED RATE OPTION

August Regulated Rate Option (RRO)
Energy will be: 6.8 cents/kwh
Variable (non-energy) will be: 0.821cents/kwh
for a total of 7.621 cents/kwh

SUPPLEMENTAL BYLAWS

We regret to inform you that our submission of 16 Supplemental Bylaws as presented, amended and voted by the membership on April 13th have been rejected by the Director of Rural Utilities. On your behalf, we met with the Director to discuss his reasons for rejection. Legal counsel for both the Director and TREA were present at this meeting. It was overall a productive meeting. The Board has reviewed legal advice and has determined that it will provide a new application to the Director based on his suggestions and have a revised set of Standard Bylaws for your review at the next AGM.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT ELECTRICITY

We use electricity everyday, but most people know very little about it. Electricity is the most versatile energy source on the planet, but we've only depended on it for about 100 years.

Electricity is a type of energy that builds up in one place, or flows from one place to another. When electricity gathers in one place it is known as static electricity. Electricity that moves from one place to another is called electric current.

Interesting facts about electricity:

1. The typical lightning bolt packs 100 million volts.
2. A spark of static electricity can measure up to 3,000 volts.
3. So many British people make tea after the TV show "EastEnders" finishes, that backup power stations go on standby to cope with the massive surge in electricity usage.
4. A typical microwave oven consumes more electricity powering its digital clock than it does heating food.
5. Water doesn't actually conduct electricity, it's the impurities in water that make it conduct electricity.
6. Coordinated power shut off events like Earth Hour, Live Earth, and Planet Aid may actually increase carbon dioxide emission as power companies struggle to cope with fluctuating electricity usage.
7. Electricity was introduced to Ethiopia in 1896 after Emperor Menelik II ordered two newly invented electric chairs as a form of humane capital punishment and realized they were useless in his country without electricity.
8. In 2005, an Australian man (on his way to a job interview) wearing a nylon jacket and wool shirt built up 40,000 volts of static electricity, resulting in burnt carpets, melted plastic, and a massive evacuation.
9. Daylight Savings doesn't actually save electricity. It still exists because it helps the economy.
10. The word "electrocute" is a combination of the words electro and execute, meaning you were killed by electricity. So, if you don't die, you were not electrocuted, you were shocked.

Facts taken from website: www.kickassfacts.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE RULES

The Utilities Consumer Advocate (UCA) has a mandate to educate and mediate for Alberta's energy consumers. Their website located at www.ucahelps.alberta.ca/ offers an extensive amount of information, one topic in particular is Customer Service Rules.

Did you know that there are rules to ensure that you receive quality service from your electricity company?

The following has been taken from the UCA website:

"Regulated and competitive electricity and natural gas companies, Rural Electrification Associations (REAs) and municipally-owned utilities are subject to the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) Billing Services rules and must comply with the Electric Utilities Act, Gas Utilities Act, and Code of Conduct Regulation. Regulated retailers must report on customer satisfaction and their handling of customers complaints to the AUC, which uses this information to monitor the performance of utility companies.

You should contact your utility company directly to discuss your concerns about service or rates. If you are still dissatisfied, you may contact the Utilities Consumer Advocate or Alberta Utilities Commission for assistance or to file a complaint.

Service guarantee credit

You may be entitled to service guarantees in the form of a \$150 credit if:

- your regulated retailer sends you a written notice of pending disconnection in error;
- your regulated retailer disconnects your service in error;
- you receive a written notice of pending referral to a credit agency in error; or
- you were referred to a credit agency in error.

Competitive retailers are not regulated by the Alberta Utilities Commission and must comply with the Consumer Protection Act and the Energy Marketing and Residential Heat Sub-Metering Regulation. If you have a concern about unfair practices or service from a competitive retailer, you should contact them directly to discuss your concern. If you are still dissatisfied, you may contact the Utilities Consumer Advocate or Service Alberta for assistance or to file a complaint.

Examples of unfair practices:

- Switching your retail service without your authorization.
- Selling energy products at your door without your invitation."

LIGHTNING ARRESTORS

The process for finding out which Tomahawk REA sites do not have lightning arrestors has concluded. Out of 698 sites 131 do not currently have lightning arrestors. There were four that the meter reader could not access and 25 idle services that were not checked. We have received a quote on the total cost to put lightning arrestors on all 131 sites and it is quite large. If you are interested in finding out if your site is included in the 131 and/or would like to have one installed (at your cost) you may contact the office at 780-514-8732.

Note to All Members

All members are free to purchase electricity services through TREA's regulated rate tariff or from a retailer of their choice. The delivery of electricity to you is not affected by your choice. If you change who you purchase electricity services from, you will continue receiving electricity from TREA. For a current list of retailers you may choose from, visit <http://www.ucahelps.alberta.ca> or call 310-4822 (toll free in Alberta).