

PSC Consumer Connection



Informed Consumers, Quality Utility Services, and a Dedicated Organization for Missourians in the 21st Century

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Restoring Electric Service

We have come to expect that if we lose electric service it will be restored within a few hours.

However, when a devastating event, like a tornado, ice storm or thunderstorm causes major damage to a system, longer outages can occur.

Every electric utility follows a basic principle when it comes to restoring power -- priority goes to the lines that will get the most people back in service the quickest. This usually begins with the transmission lines to the substations and continues out to the tap lines then to individual service lines.

Here are descriptions of some of the lines that transmit electricity to your home.

Transmission Lines: High-voltage lines that move bulk electricity from a generating plant to a substation or between substations. A problem with one of these lines could interrupt the electric power to several thousand customers.



Substations: Electrical facilities that contain equipment for switching or regulating the voltage of electricity. A problem within a substation could cause all of the customers being served from that substation to be without electric service. Also, if the problem is limited to one particular circuit leaving the substation, only those customers on that specific circuit would be without electric service. Again, a problem of this nature could interrupt electric service to several thousand customers.



Main Distribution Lines: The 7,200 to 14,400-volt lines that you see along roadways that carry power from the substation. Each line serves a portion of consumers from the substation. A problem on a specific line could leave hundreds of consumers without electric service.

Tap Lines: Electric feeder lines with limited capacity that run from a main distribution line to a few customers. A fault on a tap line would interrupt service to those customers being served by that

line only. Likewise, if the break on the tap line was repaired, the customers on that tap line would still be without power until the main line is repaired.

Individual Service Drop - The line that runs from the transformer to your meter. A problem here would only affect the electric service to an individual customer, while the remaining system would still have electric service.



Priority does go to repairing outages that may endanger the public. If the outage is not caused by a devastating event, customers who require the use of life-sustaining equipment are given priority.

NOTE: In 2008, the Missouri Public Service Commission adopted rules which require the state's four investor-owned electric companies to do more extensive tree-trimming and develop detailed infrastructure inspection plans. The goal of these rules is to increase electric service reliability for customers.

Important Safety Reminders

Customers are reminded to avoid downed power lines at all times. Some things to remember:



- ♦ Parents are urged to specifically remind children not to touch or go near any wire they may see on the ground.

- ♦ Never go near a downed wire.

While some energized wires spark and snap, others may not appear dangerous but they are.

- ♦ Downed wires could be hidden by tree limbs and debris or submerged in flooded areas.

- ♦ Take special care to look for wires before clearing debris or contacting fences, vehicles or standing water.

- ♦ Avoid any metal object making contact with a hot wire, even some distance away. These objects are dangerous to touch.

- ♦ A wire fence, metal signpost or railroad track touching an energized wire can conduct hazardous electricity a long distance.

Be Energy Efficient Website

Check out the new website beenergyefficient.org

"BEE" stands for "Be Energy Efficient," and is aimed at helping you remain in control of your energy bills. There are steps every household can take today to minimize energy use and stabilize related costs.

Conservation is an all season opportunity. Energy saving tips for both the heating and cooling seasons can be found on this website.



This project is a co-initiative of the Missouri Public Service Commission and Missouri Department of Natural Resources Energy Center.

"BEE" is also supported by many organizations and utilities serving the state of Missouri.

Act Now Before Winter Hits

The Missouri Public Service Commission is concerned over high wholesale natural gas prices and the effect they will have on heating bills this winter.

Wholesale natural gas markets are exempt from state regulation. The PSC is encouraging customers to reduce their energy consumption. Here are some points to consider.

NO-COST ENERGY SAVINGS ACTIONS

- Make sure vents are not blocked by furniture or drapes.
 - Close off rooms that are not in use.
 - Turn thermostat down when not at home.
 - Turn off lights not being used.
 - Turn down the temperature on the water heater to 120 degrees.
 - Wear extra layers of clothing or use extra blankets in the winter.
 - Check your meter weekly to monitor consumption and plan for the amount of your monthly bill.
 - Consider setting the thermostat to a temperature that is lower in winter and higher in the summer.
- Important: Seniors and people with special medical needs should check with their doctors before changing their normal home temperatures or before considering turning off air conditioning or heating units.**

Digital Television Transition

The Digital Television Transition is the nationwide congressionally mandated switch in broadcasting signals.

On February 17, 2009, television stations around the country will discontinue analog broadcasts and only broadcast in digital.

The Missouri Public Service Commission **does not** regulate television stations and **is not** involved in the digital TV transition.



The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), of which the Missouri Public Service Commission is a member, is a partner with the DTV Transition Coalition. The coalition is a group of private and public organizations working to assure a successful transition to digital television.

NARUC has developed a website as a source for DTV-related information.

For more information visit www.naruc.org/DTV

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For printed materials regarding a number of consumer issues or copies of this newsletter, please call 573-522-2760 or email gregg.ochoa@psc.mo.gov

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or email: pscinfo@psc.mo.gov

Mail your inquiry or complaint to:

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