

# COLUMBUS CURRENTS

## What to Expect When Reporting Your Power Outage

Do you ever wonder whether it's necessary to report your power outage to Columbus Electric Cooperative Response Center? The answer is a resounding "yes!" When your residence is out of power, we need to know; you may be the only one experiencing the outage. There can be any number of reasons you may lose power at your home, including animal intrusion, equipment failure, severe storms, or transmission issues from our power supplier. No matter what the cause, it is imperative that you report your outage to Columbus Electric Cooperative Response Center as soon as you are aware of it!

### What to expect when you report an outage?

If you experience an interruption in power, please call us at 1-800-228-0579 to report your outage. We have customer service representatives (CSRs) available around the clock to take your call. When you call the response center, you will hear a greeting: "Thank you for calling Columbus Electric Cooperative Response Center." If we are experiencing a wide-spread outage, you may also hear more detailed information about the areas in our service territory that are affected.

You will be prompted to enter the 10-digit phone number on the account. If you do not know the 10-digit number on your account you will be asked to please hold. You will be prompted to "press 1" if you are experiencing an outage, "press 2" to make a payment, or "press 3" for Spanish.

If you press 1 to report an outage, your call will either be directed to a CSR or to an automated interactive voice response (IVR) software system. It is always our priority to answer all calls with a CSR, however during times of heavy call volume, it may be necessary to utilize our automated system to ensure calls are handled as quickly and efficiently as possible. If your call happens to go to the IVR but is not able to be processed because the system does not recognize your phone number, your call

will be directed to a CSR queue to be answered in the order in which your call is received. You'll hear an automated "thank you for holding" message every 30 – 45 seconds as you wait. If call volume is so heavy that it will require you to remain on hold for a large amount of time, you will be prompted to call the response center back at a later time.

If you are calling the response center for purposes other than reporting an outage and press option 2, your call will be forwarded to a CSR unless we are experiencing heavy call volume. If that is the case, you may hear the following message: "Due to high call volume, please try your call again later."

### Expediting the outage reporting process

Providing excellent service to our consumers is of the upmost importance to us. Although reporting an outage through technology or holding for a time to report your outage is not ideal, it is important to do so to make us aware you are out of power. Please provide the CSR's with the following information:

**Account Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Account Service Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Account Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Account Meter Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Account Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

Most of this information can be located on your bill or to verify this information please feel free to contact our office at 575-546-8838 or 1-800-950-2667.

## Don't Wait. Be Prepared Before the Storm.

### Preparedness Actions and Items

Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).

- Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies including towelettes, soap and hand sanitizer.
- Ensure your First Aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.
- Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and portable, battery-powered radio or TV.
- Organize emergency supplies so they are together in an easily accessible location.

With advance warning if a severe storm is expected with high winds and sustained rain, you may need to take extra steps to safeguard your home. Fully charge all cell phones, laptops and devices so you have maximum power in the event of a power outage. If you plan to use a small generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

In the event of an outage, turn off appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from a power surge, and will also help prevent overloading the circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored. If utilizing a small household generator, consider using LED holiday lights to illuminate a living area. A strand of 100 white lights draws little energy yet produces considerable light. Solar lights also work, if they can receive some sunlight during the day for charging. During thunderstorms, the American Red Cross recommends avoiding electrical equipment and land-based telephones. Use battery-powered TVs and radios instead. Keep away from windows. After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs – including on your property.

## YOUR POWER OUTAGE PANTRY

We do our best to avoid power outages, but unfortunately, Mother Nature occasionally has different plans. Stay ahead of the storm by stocking your pantry with a variety of non-perishable items.

*Set these items aside for extended outages only, and your storm prep will be a breeze!*

*Don't forget to stock up on disposable goods, like paper plates, napkins, plastic cutlery and cups.*

- BEANS
- CANNED FRUIT
- CANNED TUNA
- CANNED VEGETABLES
- CEREAL
- DRIED FRUITS
- DRIED MEATS/JERKY
- GRAHAM CRACKERS
- PASTA
- RICE
- SPAM
- OATMEAL



AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

## Labor Day



**In Observance of Labor Day, CEC will be closed on Monday, September 2. Regular office hours will resume on Tuesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

## HARVEST SAFETY TIPS FOR FARMWORKERS

- **Maintain a 10-foot clearance** around all utility equipment in all directions.
- **Use a spotter and deployed flags** to maintain safe distances from power lines and other equipment when doing field work.
- **If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, contact us immediately** by phone and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab, without touching it at the same time, and hop away to safety.
- **Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle.** Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipe and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

Source: Safe Electricity



*Emergency Response Number*  
**1-800-228-0579**

*Toll - free Office Number*  
**1-800-950-COOP (2667)**

[www.columbusco-op.org](http://www.columbusco-op.org)