



# POWERLINES

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## 10 Things You Might Not Know About Power Restoration

By Stacy Chastain, General Manager at Tri-State EMC

**H**ave you ever watched a movie or TV show where a person is cooking a meal, then they suddenly snap their fingers and the meal is plated and ready to eat? That's called a jump cut.

While we wish we could jump cut from a power outage to power restoration, it can often take a lot more effort and people to make it happen.

As general manager of Tri-State EMC, I'm accustomed to members' questions about power outages and why it can take time to get the lights back on. Given our reliance on electricity,

there's simply never a good time to be without it.

I'd like to shed light on our restoration process to help our members understand what may be happening behind the scenes. Here are 10 things you might not know about power restoration:

**1. You play a part.** When your power goes out, it might be just at your home or small section of a neighborhood. There is a chance we may not know about it and no one has reported it. When you report your outage online at [www.tsemc.net](http://www.tsemc.net) or by

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## COMMON CAUSES OF POWER OUTAGES

There is never a good time for the power to go out, but if it happens on a sunny day, you might be left wondering why. Here are the most common causes of a power outage.

### WEATHER

Wind and rain can cause tree limbs to fall on power lines. Other weather effects, like lightning strikes, can cause major damage to equipment.

### CRITTERS

Squirrels, birds, snakes and other animals can inadvertently contact power lines, causing short circuits and disruptions to electrical supply.

### Scheduled MAINTENANCE

Occasionally, we plan outages to perform upgrades or repairs to parts of the local grid.

### ACCIDENTS

Vehicles can crash into utility poles, bringing down power lines. Construction and excavation work can also result in disruptions to underground lines.

# Power Restoration, *continued*

calling us at (706) 492-3251, you help us respond quickly and effectively—assisting not only yourself but possibly also your neighbors.

**2. Our employees might be affected, too.** Because Tri-State EMC is a local electric cooperative owned by the members we serve, our employees are local. They are your neighbors, friends and familiar community volunteers. They might even live on your street. When you're without power, our people might be, too.

**3. It's a team effort.** A variety of Tri-State EMC employees are working to get your power restored as soon as possible. Our customer service representatives are taking your calls, engineers and field staff are surveying damage, the vegetation management team is clearing hazards, dispatchers are organizing crews, warehouse employees are prepping supplies and communicators are keeping everyone informed of progress or potential dangers. When your power goes out, we all work together as quickly and safely as possible to get you back to normal.

**4. We assess the situation first.** Every outage is different, and we don't know how dangerous it is or what equipment might need to be replaced. When responding to outages, we first need to see what happened, then determine what materials we need and a plan for how to fix the problem(s) without compromising electric flow for the rest of our members.

**5. Restoration is normally prioritized by the largest number of members we can get back on in the shortest amount of time.** Our crews focus on responding first to public safety issues and critical services like hospitals. Then, we complete work that impacts the largest number of people first.

**6. Our employees face many dangers.** Besides working around high-voltage electricity, our crews are on alert for wild animals, weather elements, falling trees and fast-moving cars. (If you ever drive past one of our vehicles, please slow down.)

**7. Flickering lights can be a good sign.** Some folks mistake flickering lights for outages or surges, but these blinks are important because they indicate our equipment works and prevents a possible outage likely caused by stray tree limbs on the lines.

**8. You need a backup plan.** We do our best to help those who need it, but if you depend on electricity for life support purposes, a backup plan is a must. We don't always know how long restoration efforts will take. If you're unsure what to do, call



us so we can help you prepare an emergency location.

**9. Our employees have to plan and eat.** If you ever see our trucks in a restaurant parking lot while your power is out, know that sometimes our employees huddle in a safe, common area to map out their plan for getting your power back on. Also, our crews work long, hard hours during outages and need to take time for meals just like everyone else. (Though truth be told, many times they'd rather work through and only take breaks when strongly encouraged.)

**10. We do our best to avoid power disruptions,** but they are inevitable from time to time. If the lights go out, know that your Tri-State EMC team is working as quickly and safely as possible to restore power.

If you experience an outage, please let us know by reporting it online or by calling (706) 492-3251. We are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.