



Hydro Ottawa POWER OUTAGES — CONSUMER PREPAREDNESS AND INFORMATION SOURCES



A leading, trusted, integrated utility services company

Hydro Ottawa has a very good record for keeping Ottawa's power supply reliable. No electricity distribution company, however, can prevent all outages. The majority are caused by natural events — for example, the 1998 ice storm.

There are a number of actions that electricity consumers can take in advance to be prepared for an extended power outage. There are also a number of communications channels open to the public to get information about the extent and potential duration of outages.

CONSUMER PREPAREDNESS

The first step that customers can take to ensure they cope well during an outage is to prepare ahead.

Electricity customers should have a first aid kit with enough supplies (including prescriptions) to keep their families self-sufficient in their homes for at least three days. They should have a readily accessible list of emergency contact numbers, and ensure they have a phone that does not need electricity.

It is important to have on hand enough water for at least three days, as well as easy-to-store food that does not need refrigeration or cooking. Flashlights and batteries should be available and stored where they can be quickly reached. A battery-powered or wind-up radio is helpful for getting immediate information.

In the event of an extended outage, refrigerator and freezer doors must be kept shut as much as possible — food will keep for 12 hours in the refrigerator and 24 to 48 hours in a freezer.

In an extended winter outage, it is a very good idea to shut off power to the electric water heater, shut off water at the main valve (usually found in the basement near the water meter), open taps to drain the pipes and leave taps open, flush toilets to empty them, and drain the dishwasher and washing machine. These actions will help keep frozen pipes from bursting.

SAFETY TIPS

To ensure safety, members of the public should never go near downed power lines. Another excellent safety tip is to never use barbecues, camp stoves or generators indoors. For those using a fireplace for heat, they should first ensure that the chimney is free of creosote buildup or debris. Customers should always use flashlights rather than candles; if candles are the only choice available, they should be placed in a non-combustible container away from drapes and carpets.

HYDRO OTTAWA OUTAGE INFORMATION SOURCES

During an outage, whether planned or unplanned, Hydro Ottawa attempts to provide as much information as possible to customers and the media. Providing timely and accurate information when outages do occur is a very high priority for Hydro Ottawa.

In most situations, information can be provided to customers, media and stakeholders almost in real time, through Hydro Ottawa's dedicated outage line, online power outage map and special alerts. In some cases an estimated time of restoration cannot be immediately provided, because the cause of the outage has not yet been identified.

Power Outage Reporting and Information Line — 613-738-0188

Hydro Ottawa provides recorded announcements in both English and in French as well as access to live call agents. Information on current power outages is recorded as soon as notification is received, and updates continue every hour or as new information becomes available.

Hydro Ottawa has an Interactive Voice Response application to make it easier to report outages and to get information. The call duration for this process is typically less than 30 seconds, whereas the manual reporting system would take an average of three minutes.

The faster the automated system receives outage reports, the quicker it can diagnose the specific outage area, thereby reducing restoration time.

Power Outage Map

The outage map of our service territory is updated every 15 minutes. It includes information on any outages affecting ten or more customers that reside within 200 metres of each other. Unconfirmed outages are areas that our outage management system has identified as possibly being without power; they have yet to be confirmed. Last updated 12-07-2012 10:50.



Online Power Outage Map — www.hydroottawa.com/outagemap

Hydro Ottawa's online outage map was launched in 2011. It displays the location of current outages, the estimated number of customers affected, the cause of the outage, and the estimated time of restoration, if known. This information is updated every 15 minutes.

Media and Stakeholder Communications

If an unplanned outage affects more than 500 customers, Hydro Ottawa provides email notifications or "alerts" to media outlets. The information provided includes the number of customers affected, city ward, area description, time outage began, estimated restoration time and cause of the outage.

Several Ottawa councillors have also opted to receive email alerts when outages affect their ward.

All local media have Hydro Ottawa's 24/7 media pager number and often contact the company in this way during an outage.

Hydro Ottawa also informs the City's 311 information line, as well as large commercial customers who may be impacted.

Website

Power outage information is posted on the Hydro Ottawa website as expediently as possible the next business day on unplanned outages that affected more than 50 customers.

This information stays on the site for one month.



INFORMATION PROVIDED FOR A PLANNED OUTAGE

Whenever a planned outage is to occur, Hydro Ottawa delivers bilingual letters to all homes and businesses impacted or in the vicinity of the project, explaining the planned work to be completed. Customers who will be directly impacted by a power outage related to the planned work project receive a separate notice delivered in advance of the outage.

Ottawa City Councillors are also notified if the planned project impacts a significant number of customers.

When a planned project will affect a significant number of customers, Hydro Ottawa also publishes an advertisement in the community newspapers informing them about the upcoming planned work. In addition, the planned work project is listed on the company website.

Source: Hydro Ottawa website and communications

Contact Us

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CUSTOMER SERVICE

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POWER OUTAGE REPORTING AND INFORMATION

- > www.hydroottawa.com/outages
- > 613-738-0188

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