

# Hurricane Preparedness Tips



## ELECTRIC SERVICE

### Prepare for Power Outages:

After assessing damage caused by a storm, CenterPoint Energy crews begin restoring power in this order:

- Restore service to key facilities vital to public safety, health and welfare - like hospitals, police/fire departments, water treatment plants - and secure downed power lines.
- Repair major lines and fuses to restore power to the greatest number of customers in the least amount of time, usually beginning with transmission and substations.
- Repair transformers (each typically serve 10 customers).
- Repair service drops and underground lines to restore power to individual homes.

According to the guidance below from the National Hurricane Center and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale, customers should be prepared to be without electric service according to the following guidelines:

HURRICANE	WIND SPEED	TYPE OF DAMAGE AND ESTIMATED OUTAGE*
<b>CATEGORY 1</b>	Winds 74-95 mph	Extensive damage to power lines and poles likely will result in power outages that could last a few to several days.
<b>CATEGORY 2</b>	Winds 96-110 mph	Near-total power loss is expected with outages that could last from several days to weeks.
<b>CATEGORY 3</b>	Winds 111-129 mph	Electricity and water will be unavailable for several days to weeks after the storm passes.
<b>CATEGORY 4</b>	Winds 130-156 mph	Most trees will be snapped or uprooted and power poles downed. Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will last for weeks to possibly months.
<b>CATEGORY 5</b>	Winds 157 mph and up	Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will last for weeks to possibly months.

\*Individual restoration times will vary.

The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale's information can be found here: <https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/aboutsshws.php>

Individual restoration times can vary for a severe weather event. Under CenterPoint Energy's restoration process, your neighbor's power may be restored before yours if there is a problem with your individual service drop.

### Pre-storm tips:

- If someone in your home depends on electricity for life-sustaining equipment, you need to make other arrangements.
- Turn off your electricity at the circuit breaker if you evacuate or expect flood water to approach your home.
- Unplug sensitive electrical appliances, such as your computer.
- Sign up for CenterPoint Energy's free\* Power Alert Service<sup>®</sup> to receive alerts by email, text and/or phone call. Enroll at [CenterPointEnergy.com/PowerAlertService](https://CenterPointEnergy.com/PowerAlertService).

\*Standard text messaging rates may apply

### Post-storm tips:

- Every day, equipment from CenterPoint Energy brings you power safely. During a major storm, damage is often caused to our electrical equipment. It is important that our customers realize that damaged electrical equipment and downed power lines could be life threatening. Remember, all CenterPoint Energy electrical equipment should be handled only by our trained personnel and authorized CenterPoint Energy contractors.
- Stay away from low-hanging, downed power lines or lines that could be submerged in standing water. Treat all downed power lines as if they are energized. Report any low-hanging or downed power lines by calling **713-207-2222**.
- Because it's a good conductor, water poses a potential electric safety threat – always be careful not to touch water, or anything in contact with it, near a downed power line. Any amount of water, including a puddle, can become energized. If you see a downed power line near water, retreat to a safe distance, then call CenterPoint Energy immediately at **713-207-2222** to report it.
- Flood waters can be hazardous. Always use extreme care when stepping into flooded areas. Submerged outlets or electrical cords can energize water, even from a distance. Any submerged appliances or equipment will need to dry for at least one week and be checked by a qualified repair person prior to being turned on.
- Limit calls to CenterPoint Energy during the first few days to only true emergencies. We have technology in place that indicates locations of widespread power outages.
- If you have evacuated and want to know if your home has power please do not call CenterPoint Energy in the first few days following the storm as we are prioritizing emergency calls. Instead, you can: Sign up for our Power Alert Service at [CenterPointEnergy.com/PowerAlertService](https://CenterPointEnergy.com/PowerAlertService) and check [CenterPointEnergy.com/OutageTracker](https://CenterPointEnergy.com/OutageTracker) for outage updates.
- If water has risen above the electrical outlets, contact a licensed electrician before turning on the main circuit breaker.

# EMERGENCY NUMBERS

## CenterPoint Energy Customer Service

**Electric** 713-207-2222 (800-332-7143)

**Natural Gas** 713-659-2111 (800-752-8036)

[CenterPointEnergy.com/StormCenter](http://CenterPointEnergy.com/StormCenter)



- Boats or other vehicles being used in high water can expose you to danger from power lines at their normal height. Be aware and stay away.
- Check the weatherhead, which connects the overhead power line to your home or business. Any weatherhead problems will need to be repaired by an electrician prior to service being restored.
- Do not connect generators directly to wiring in a house or building, which can create a safety hazard for CenterPoint Energy's linemen.
- Never run generators indoors or in a garage. Gasoline-powered generators can produce carbon monoxide, and the odorless fumes can be deadly.

## NATURAL GAS SERVICE

### Pre-storm tips:

- CenterPoint Energy strongly advises customers NOT to turn off their natural gas at the meter. The natural gas meter should be left on to maintain proper pressure in the natural gas piping within the house and to prevent water from entering the lines should flooding occur.
- If a customer wishes to discontinue natural gas service, the natural gas can be turned off at each appliance. Later, to restore natural gas service to an appliance, you may follow the written instructions located on the appliance for re-lighting. If unable to locate instructions or you don't feel comfortable re-lighting, call a qualified plumber/technician.

### Post-storm tips:

- As you return to your home or business, please be alert for leaking natural gas. If you smell natural gas – which has a distinctive, strong odor, often compared to rotten eggs or sulfur – leave the area immediately on foot, and tell others to leave, too. Do not turn the lights on or off, smoke, strike a match, use a phone or operate anything that might cause a spark, including a flashlight or a generator. Also, please do not attempt to turn natural gas valves on or off. Once safely away from the area, call 911 and CenterPoint Energy, and we will send a trained service technician immediately.

- Identify the location of the natural gas meter. As you are putting out debris for heavy trash pick-up, please make sure it is placed away from the meter. In some areas the meter may be located near the curb. Trash collectors are using mechanized equipment to pick up heavy debris, and if the debris is near a natural gas meter, the equipment could pull up the meter damaging it, and causing a potentially hazardous situation. If this does happen, please leave the area immediately and call CenterPoint Energy.
- If your home was flooded, call a licensed plumber or a natural gas appliance technician to inspect your appliances prior to requesting a service reconnection. Don't forget to check outdoor appliances, such as pool heaters and gas grills.
- While conducting clean-up, call 811 to locate utility lines prior to digging on your property.

During a natural disaster causing widespread outages, CenterPoint Energy communicates with the public in a variety of ways.

**Sign up for our Power Alert Service at [CenterPointEnergy.com/PowerAlertService](http://CenterPointEnergy.com/PowerAlertService) and check [CenterPointEnergy.com/OutageTracker](http://CenterPointEnergy.com/OutageTracker) for outage updates.**

You can also follow us on Twitter or Facebook to receive important updates during a storm.

### CenterPoint Energy's social media

- [Facebook.com/CenterPointEnergy](https://www.facebook.com/CenterPointEnergy)
- [Twitter.com/CenterPoint](https://twitter.com/CenterPoint)
- [Youtube.com/CenterPointEnergyVid](https://www.youtube.com/CenterPointEnergyVid)
- [Linkedin.com/company/centerpoint-energy](https://www.linkedin.com/company/centerpoint-energy)

