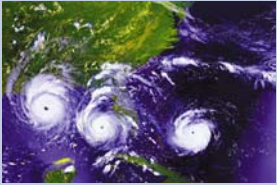


Florida Public Service Commission

consumer E-Newsletter

June 2008



Hurricane Season Starts June 1

The Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) encourages every family, business, and community to have a disaster plan in place before a hurricane threatens. Stock up on supplies, secure your home, and make sure your family knows where to go and what to do if a disaster should strike.

Develop a family plan

- Know your home's vulnerability to storm surge, flooding, and wind.
- Locate a safe room or the safest area in your home for every weather hazard.
- Determine escape routes from your home and places to meet.
- Have an out-of-state friend as a family contact so all your family members have a single point of contact.
- Check your insurance coverage. Flood damage may not be covered by homeowner's insurance.

Create a disaster supply kit

Use the disaster supply kit check list at [Hurricane Survival Kit](#) to be sure you have necessary items in case of a disaster.

Secure your home

No home is hurricane proof, but you can take steps to keep storm damage to a minimum. The PSC's [Hurricane House](#) Web site provides valuable information about how to prepare your home for a hurricane.

Storm Hardening



The PSC's push for Florida's electric and telecommunications companies to improve their system's reliability and resilience will make them better prepared for the upcoming hurricane season. Storm hardening plans are designed to establish the regulatory groundwork for an electric system that can withstand major storms while preventing excessive rate increases to fund the upgrades.

Some steps the PSC has taken include:

- Each investor-owned electric utility (IOU) is now required to establish a plan, implementation timeline, and rate impact to upgrade existing transmission facilities to withstand hurricanes. The utilities must report the status of its storm hardening plan to the PSC each year.
- All Florida electric utilities, including municipally-owned utilities and rural electric cooperatives, must adhere to the National Electric Safety Code (NESC). The PSC has expanded the safety standard to require electric utilities to follow the more stringent extreme wind load requirements of the NESC for any new construction, major planned work, or critical infrastructure facilities.
- All IOUs and local exchange telephone companies must conduct a mandatory eight-year wood pole inspection program.

Read [about all PSC Storm Hardening Activities](#) on the PSC Web site.

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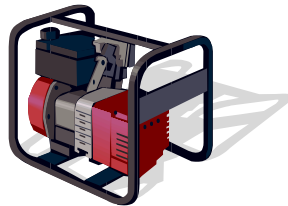
Electric Utility Restoration After the Storm

Immediately after a hurricane has passed, you may see utility company trucks driving around your neighborhood and wonder why they don't stop when there is obvious damage to the lines.

Before its restoration efforts can begin, the electric company must evaluate the extent of damage to the system. Crews begin this effort as soon as conditions are safe. Once the crew's survey is completed, the company puts a detailed plan into action to restore service to the greatest number of customers first.

For public safety and health, however, some facilities are given priority. Plans vary somewhat from company to company but generally follow this format:

1. Lines running from the electric generating facilities must be restored before service can be restored anywhere else.
2. Hospitals, police, fire stations, water treatment plants, and emergency shelters come next.
3. Major power lines that serve a large number of customers follow.
4. Smaller lines, such as those serving individual streets, are repaired next.
5. Service to individual homes will then be re-established.



Generator Safety

Portable generators are useful when temporary or remote electric power is needed, but they also can be hazardous. Generators can cause carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from the toxic exhaust gases, electric shock or electrocution, and fire.

Every year, people die in incidents related to portable generator use. Most incidents associated with portable generators reported to the [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) (CPSC) involve CO poisoning from generators used indoors or in partially-enclosed spaces.

Carbon Monoxide Hazards

NEVER use a generator in enclosed or partially-enclosed spaces! Generators can produce high levels of CO very quickly. When you use a portable generator, remember that you cannot smell or see CO. Even if you can't smell exhaust fumes, you may still be exposed to CO.

If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak while using a generator, get to fresh air **RIGHT AWAY. DO NOT DELAY.** The CO from generators can rapidly lead to a person's full incapacitation and death.

If you experience serious symptoms, get medical attention immediately. Inform medical staff that CO poisoning is suspected. If you experience symptoms while indoors, have someone call the fire department to determine when it is safe to re-enter the building.

Follow these safety tips to protect against CO poisoning:

- **NEVER** use a generator indoors, including homes, garages, basements, crawl spaces, and other enclosed or partially-enclosed areas, even with ventilation. Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent CO build-up.

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Bookmark these valuable Web sites for hurricane information:



[National Hurricane Center](#)



[State Emergency Response Team](#)



[Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)



[American Red Cross](#)

Electric Utilities Storm Information:

[Florida Power & Light Co.](#)
[Florida Public Utilities](#)
[Gulf Power](#)
[Progress Energy](#)
[Tampa Electric Company](#)

- Follow the instructions that come with your generator. Put the unit outside and away from doors, windows, and vents that could allow CO to come indoors.
- Install battery-operated CO alarms or plug-in CO alarms with battery backup in your home, according to the manufacturer's installation instructions. The CO alarms should be certified to the requirements of the latest safety standards (UL 2034 or IAS 6-96).
- Test your CO alarms frequently and replace dead batteries.

Electrical Hazards

Follow these tips to protect against shock and electrocution:

- Keep the generator dry and do not use in rain or wet conditions. Place it on a dry surface under an open, canopy-like structure. Dry your hands before touching the generator.
- Plug appliances directly into the generator. Or, use a heavy duty, outdoor-rated extension cord that is at least rated (in watts or amps) equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads. Check to make sure the entire cord is free of cuts or tears and that the plug has all three prongs, especially the grounding pin.
- **NEVER try to power the house wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet, a practice known as "backfeeding."** Backfeeding is extremely dangerous and presents an electrocution risk to utility workers and neighbors served by the same utility transformer. The practice also bypasses some of the built-in household circuit protection devices.
- If you must connect the generator to the house wiring to power appliances, have a qualified electrician install the appropriate equipment in accordance with local electrical codes. Or, check with your utility company to install an appropriate power transfer switch.
- For power outages, permanently installed stationary generators are better suited for providing backup power to the home. Even a properly connected portable generator can become overloaded, resulting in overheating or stressing the generator components and possibly leading to generator failure.

Fire Hazards

Follow these tips to prevent fires:

- Never store fuel for your generator in the home. Gasoline, propane, kerosene, and other flammable liquids should be stored outside the living areas in properly-labeled, non-glass safety containers. Do not store them near a fuel-burning appliance, such as a natural gas water heater in a garage. If the fuel is spilled or the container is not sealed properly, invisible vapors from the fuel can travel along the ground and be ignited by the appliance's pilot light or by arcs from electric switches in the appliance.
- Before refueling the generator, turn it off and let it cool down. Gasoline spilled on hot engine parts could ignite.

Hurricane Categories*

Category 1

Winds 74 - 95 miles per hour (mph)

Category 2

Winds 96 - 110 mph

Category 3

Winds 111 - 130 mph

Category 4

Winds 131 - 155 mph

Category 5

Winds 155+ mph

Deadliest Hurricanes*

1900, Galveston, Texas
8,000 deaths

1928, Southeast Florida
2,500 deaths

2005 Katrina, Louisiana and Mississippi
1,500 deaths

Costliest Hurricanes*

2005 Katrina -
\$81,000,000,000

1992 Andrew -
\$26,500,000,000

2005 Wilma –
\$20,600,000,000

Earliest Recorded Hurricane*

March 7, 1908

Latest Hurricane

December 31, 1954

* National Hurricane Center