

SLECA begins largest power restoration effort in its 83-year history

SLECA has initiated the largest power restoration effort in its history to restore power after Hurricane Ida. As of 9 p.m. on August 31, 2021 approximately 19,191 consumers were without power. 90% of SLECA's total system is down. SLECA is working to restore power quickly and safely. The damages to the system are catastrophic and some of the most serious damage was in very remote and hard to access areas requiring specialized equipment. Full power restoration is expected to take weeks if not longer to complete.

"In addition to SLECA's linemen we have a total of 742 additional line workers and tree trimmers from across the country who are being housed in a large tent city. Specialized equipment and material are also located at the tent city," said SLECA General Manager Joe Ticheli. "As we begin this historic rebuilding process, a systematic approach designed to get the most assets and consumers back up in the least amount of time is being used. It has been more than a generation since we had Hurricane Gustav but the damage from Hurricane Gustav was nothing remotely compared to Hurricane Ida which was many times more destructive."

Although a full damage assessment is still underway, SLECA estimates that Hurricane Ida snapped thousands of poles and damaged or brought down hundreds of miles of line. SLECA's system has never experienced this type of damage. In addition, several transmission lines that our substations have been severely damaged. Those transmission lines are not owned by SLECA so the restoration timeline for those repairs are beyond the electric cooperative's control.

SLECA continues to urge member-consumers to put safety first and take the following steps:

- Do not clear any right-of-way to personal property until SLECA clears right of way for you. There are numerous life-threatening hazards as well as potential to do more damage to our system. Please wait until your cooperative is available to clear a path for you.
- Stay away from downed wires. Always assume they are energized. Contact SLECA to report downed wires or an outage.
- Avoid flooded areas. Flooding will be a major threat from Hurricane Ida. Flash flooding can occur suddenly due to intense rainfall. Long-term flooding along rivers and bayous persist for days following a storm. When approaching water on a roadway, remember: Don't Drown. Turn Around.
- Avoid crews working in the street and give utility crews the right of way on highways and roads. This will keep you and the crews safe and allow them to work on restoring your power.

- If you plan to use a portable generator, follow the manufacturer's instructions and use only when necessary. Don't overload it and turn it off at night when you're asleep or if you leave your home.
- To avoid the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, place portable generators outside in a well-ventilated area, more than 20 feet away from your home, doors and windows. Never run a generator inside, not even in your garage. Do not connect the generator directly into your home's main fuse box or circuit panel.
- Protect food and refrigerated medicine with ice in an insulated cooler. If you are without power for more than two hours, refrigerated foods should be placed in a cooler. Foods will stay frozen for 36 to 48 hours in a fully loaded freezer if the door remains closed, and a half-full freezer will generally keep frozen foods for up to 24 hours. Check [foodsafety.gov](https://www.foodsafety.gov) to learn more about when to throw out or keep food after a power outage.
- Turn off power to flood-prone areas if it is safe to do so. However, if you have an electric sump pump for your home, you should not turn off the power.
- Tune in to local news broadcasts for the latest emergency information.

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Photo: Graphic systematic approach designed to get the most assets and consumers back up in the least amount of time.

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Powering Up After an Outage

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of members in the shortest time possible. Here's how we get to work when you find yourself in the dark:

1

1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines:

Transmission towers and cables supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members), and they rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2

2. Distribution Substation:

A substation can serve hundreds or thousands of members. When a major outage occurs, our line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist further down the line.

3

3. Main Distribution Lines:

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of members in our local communities.

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4. Tap Lines:

If local outages persist, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes.

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5. Service Lines:

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. If you experience an outage, please give us a call so we can isolate the issue.