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What you need to know about power outages

**Summer storms, accompanied by heavy wind and lightning, are major causes of power outages.** However, there are many other causes of power outages that can strike at unexpected times. Animals, underground cable failures, trees and vegetation are a few of Dakota Electric's top causes for unplanned power outages (page 3).

**My power is out. Now what?** Before calling Dakota Electric to report an outage, first check to see if your home's circuit panel or fuse box has tripped or blown a fuse. This can also cause a power failure. If tripped, reset the breaker or replace the blown fuse. If the power is out in your entire neighborhood, call Dakota Electric's 24/7 year-round emergency line at 651-463-6201 or visit [www.DakotaElectric.com > Power Outage](http://www.DakotaElectric.com) to report your outage.

**Make sure we have your correct phone number on file.** Both our online and automated phone reporting systems use the phone number associated with your account to locate your residence during an outage. Update your number by calling member services at 651-463-6212 or visiting [www.DakotaElectric.com > Power Outages](http://www.DakotaElectric.com) > Power Outage. *Click on Update it now.*

**Knowing when your power will be restored is a bit tricky.** We know members want to know why the lights are out and when they’re coming back on. However, determining the cause of a power outage can take time. Sometimes it’s apparent why the power is out, such as during a big storm. Other times we won't know until the problem is investigated.

Statistically, members experience only one power outage every 3.5 years, and for those that do, their power is out an average of 65 minutes. Many factors determine how long it will take to restore power, and it’s impossible to know for sure until we identify the cause. Follow us on Facebook or Twitter for outage news. We generally post updates for larger outages.

As always, Dakota Electric staff and crews appreciate everyone's patience. We understand that power outages are an inconvenience to our members. Our number one goal at that time is to restore power as quickly and safely as possible.

And of course, **stay away from downed lines.** Always assume a downed power line is energized and dangerous. Keep people and pets away until crews arrive and tell you it is safe.
TOP 4 UNPLANNED OUTAGE CAUSES IN 2020

1. TREES
   Overhead power lines leading to your house are vulnerable to damage from falling trees and branches. High winds, lightning or heavy rain can cause trees to touch, snap or even bring down utility poles and wires. A random power outage can happen simply when an old or diseased tree topples over without warning. Trees falling on power lines or tree limbs coming into contact with power lines are the most frequent causes of power outages, even in good weather. To reduce the potential for outages, Dakota Electric maintains a strict tree trimming and vegetation schedule. Learn more at www.DakotaElectric.com > Trees & Power Lines.

2. ANIMALS
   Although we place barriers between wildlife and electrical equipment, squirrels, birds and other small animals may still cause power outages. By climbing on overhead equipment or inside ground mounted equipment, such as transformers, switch boxes or fuse enclosures, animals can cause a short circuit interrupting the flow of power.

3. WEATHER
   High winds, especially when combined with precipitation from seasonal storms, can cause damage to electrical utility systems, resulting in service interruptions to large numbers of our members. Major weather-related power outages can be caused by damage to large transmission lines which carry bulk power long distances (pages 4 and 5).

4. EQUIPMENT FAILURE
   Though we work through a proactive maintenance plan each year, equipment failures still occur and cause a small number of outages. In those instances, crews are dispatched to repair or replace impacted equipment caused by transformer failures, broken insulators, bad underground cables, etc.

   Sometimes, underground cables are hit and damaged by people digging into or around them. It’s important to call Gopher State One Call (8-1-1) before digging into the ground—including planting a tree, building a deck, installing a fence or sprinkler system, or digging a hole for a new mailbox.
Powering Up After an Outage

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored quickly. 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. 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. 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. 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.

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.

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 call Dakota Electric’s 24/7 year-round emergency line at 651-463-6201 so we can isolate the issue.

For more information on how power is restored, check out a video produced by Great River Energy, Dakota Electric’s power supplier, at: www.dakotaelectric.com > report an outage > outage restoration

Source: NRECA
SAVE ENERGY, SAVE MONEY

SUMMER ENERGY-SAVING TIPS

- Close blinds and drapes during the day to keep heat out.
- Turn off lights and ceiling fans when you leave a room. Fans cool people, not rooms.
- Use solar lighting to brighten up your outdoor space. Solar lights are easy to install and are low maintenance.
- On hot days, avoid using the oven; cook on the stove, use a microwave or grill outside.
- Replace disposable air filters (or clean permanent filters) once a month to maximize efficiency. Or follow manufacturer’s guidelines.
- Install a programmable thermostat to easily adjust the temperature when you are sleeping or away from home. Set your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees higher than its average setting while on vacation.
- Avoid phantom energy by unplugging appliances and turning off smart power strips.
- Set your water heater to 120 degrees. When on vacation, turn down your water heater to “vacation mode” to avoid standby losses.
- Seal cracks and openings to prevent warm air from leaking into your home.

Take advantage of these hot summer rebates.

- Battery-powered yard tools weigh less, produce less noise, cost less over the life of the tool, and are better for the environment. Eliminate fuel costs and the need for preventative maintenance and repair of a combustion engine by purchasing a battery-powered yard tool. Check with Dakota Electric to receive a $25-to-$50 rebate on qualifying yard tools.
- Schedule regular maintenance for your cooling equipment to maximize its efficiency. Check with Dakota Electric to receive a $25 rebate for having your system tuned up by a contractor of your choice. Sign up for Dakota Electric’s Cycled Air Conditioning® program and receive a $39 summer bill credit or a reduced price on the electricity your central air conditioner uses.
- Lawn Tools
- AC Tuneup

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: DAKOTAELECTRIC.COM > MEMBER SERVICES > PROGRAMS & REBATES > FOR YOUR HOME

Summer Rates Now in Effect

Dakota Electric’s summer rates reflect the cost we pay for wholesale electricity when increased energy use drives up the demand and cost of electricity. Summer rates go into effect every June, July and August.

By reducing your energy use, you can lower your monthly electric bill this summer. Looking for more ways to save? Call our Energy Experts® at 651-463-6243 or email energyexperts@dakotaelectric.com and ask about programs, rebates and current promotions perfect for you.
Election Results

Jerry Pittman
District: 1 | Incumbent

Clay Van De Bogart
District: 2 | Incumbent

Kenneth Danner
District: 3 | Incumbent

Judy Kimmes
District: 4 | Incumbent

While this year’s Annual Meeting was canceled due to COVID-19, the election process continued with voting taking place online and through mail. Dakota Electric Association’s membership reelected four incumbents and passed an amendment regarding vacancies under Article III, Section 5 of the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

Members who wish to view the annual meeting reports can watch them online at: www.DakotaElectric.com > About Us > Board of Directors. Here is a brief overview of the reports:

- President and Chief Executive Officer Greg Miller highlighted the cooperative’s success navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, completing additional infrastructure upgrades in 2020 and continuing the advanced meter upgrade project.
- Board Chair Jerry Pittman discussed providing funds to emergency assistance agencies during the pandemic, continuing the cooperative’s commitment to community and managing board business while meeting remotely.
- Board Treasurer Jim Sheldon provided the 2020 financial report.

Quick Tip!
If your LCR was recently upgraded, please start your AC to make sure everything is running properly before the summer heat hits. Call the Energy Experts® at 651-463-6243 if you have any questions.

METER & LCR UPDATE

We’re actively upgrading our meters and load control receivers (LCR) to better serve our members. You may see a Dakota Electric technician in your yard.

Members will receive a postcard in the mail notifying them that their meter(s) or LCRs will be upgraded. Once a meter technician arrives at the member’s home, they will knock and present themselves. All technicians will follow social distancing guidelines and wear a mask while making contact with the member.

After the new equipment is installed the contractor will leave behind a door hanger informing the member of the change. Thank you for your patience as we work to improve our service.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ADVANCED METER PROJECT, CALL US AT 651-460-7499, EMAIL METERS@DAKOTAELECTRIC.COM OR VISIT: DAKOTAELECTRIC.COM > METERS.
Are you struggling to pay your bill?

Dakota Electric is resuming collections

We are resuming collection activity including disconnections and late fees based on account status. Disconnect notices will be mailed to members with past-due accounts starting June 1.

If you need more time to pay the amount owed, we will work with you to establish a payment plan for your account. You can contact us Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at 651-463-6212 or 1-800-874-3409, or email customerservice@dakotaelectric.com.

Energy assistance resources available*

Scott-Carver-Dakota CAP Agency  
651-322-3500 | 2496 145th St. W., Rosemount, MN 55068

360 Communities  
952-985-5300 | 501 East Highway 13, Suite 112, Burnsville, MN 55337

Dakota County Emergency Assistance  
651-554-5611 | 1 Mendota Road W., Suite 100, West St. Paul, MN 55118

Goodhue County Health & Human Services  
651-385-3200 | 426 West Ave., Red Wing, MN 55066

Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.  
507-316-0610 | 1414 North Star Dr., Zumbrota, MN 55992

Rice County Social Services  
507-332-6115 | 320 3rd St. NW., Faribault, MN 55021

Scott County Human Services  

*Energy-assistance funding is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis.