

BREMCO On High Alert for Snow, Wind

Written by Renee Whitener, BREMCO
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Line technicians and all other employees of Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation are on high alert, ready to respond should outages occur as a result of a major storm event predicted for the cooperative's service area. With weather predictions calling for high winds, cold temperatures, snow and other precipitation through Tuesday, Blue Ridge Electric reminds members to report all outages to our PowerLine at 1-800-448-2383.

In preparation for the severe weather, line crews are double-checking equipment and supplies, and are topping off their truck's gas tanks in the event of outages. Member services staff and other employees are also preparing and ready to assist members as needed.

The cooperative also reminds the public to be aware of the dangers of downed power lines which can result from severe weather, especially if icing occurs on power lines or winds are extremely high. Vehicles skidding and colliding into power poles can also cause downed power lines. The public is advised to stay away from downed power lines because they can still be energized. Coming into contact with an energized line could produce a serious injury or even death. No one but a trained line technician should handle or be near a downed power line. The public should report downed power lines by calling any local Blue Ridge Electric office.

Blue Ridge Electric offers members the following emergency planning tips to help prepare for outages:

Keep the following emergency supplies on hand:

- A battery operated radio and fresh batteries for the latest weather and power restoration updates
- Flashlights, along with extra batteries
- Water for drinking and cooking. If you have a well, you should also fill your tub with water for flushing toilets.
- Nonperishable food
- Manual can opener
- Wind-up or battery operated clock
- Extra blankets, sleeping bags, quilts
- Paper plates, cups, and utensils
- A grill for cooking (along with extra charcoal and lighter, or propane, depending on your grill). Be sure to use the grill, as well as gas stoves, outside your home in a well-ventilated area to avoid a fire hazard or dangerous fumes of carbon monoxide!!
- If you have a baby in the home, be sure to keep a thermos handy for keeping baby formula warm. Also have extra diapers and formula on hand.

If your power is interrupted, you should:

- Report the outage by calling PowerLine at 1-800-448-2383
- Keep warm by layering your cloths and using blankets
- Preserve heat by closing off any unused rooms in your house.
- Guard against spoiled food by refraining from opening your refrigerator or freezer door
- Prevent a hazardous situation by making sure your range and oven are turned off.
- If you use a portable generator, prevent a fatality or injury by making sure generators are safely connected. Back-feed into the utility system from improperly installed generators can harm or even kill a line technician who is working on power restoration. Improperly installed generators can also damage your appliances. Be sure a qualified, licensed electrician installs a double-pole, double-throw transfer switch to connect the generator to the electrical system. This

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is required by the National Electrical Code, and the generator connection must also meet local ordinances. Contact a licensed electrician for more information.