



Duke Energy is prepared for hurricane season

ST. PETERSBURG, FL/PRNewswire/ -- As the start of the hurricane season approaches, Duke Energy employees are prepared for any severe weather that might threaten Florida this year.

"Duke Energy is ready to respond and restore power," said Alex Glenn, Duke Energy, state president–Florida. "Last year, we invested \$179 million to strengthen our system against storms. While our name has changed, our commitment to restoring power quickly has not wavered."

The quickest way to report an outage during a storm is to call the company's automated outage-reporting system at 800-228-8485.

After severe weather, Duke Energy takes specific steps to restore power. Duke Energy crews first assess damage and determine which personnel, equipment and supplies are needed to make repairs.

The company's top priority is to restore power to public safety and public health infrastructure before moving to other areas with outages.

Duke Energy crews will begin work whenever it is safe to do so, and will work around the clock to restore power as safely and quickly as possible.

Duke Energy offers the following storm safety tips:

When a storm threatens

- Duke Energy has a storm information Web site for customers. The site, www.duke-energy.com/storms, has information for customers on how to prepare for major storms and what they can do if a power outage occurs as a result of a storm. Customers should log on before the storm hits and print information they can reference during the storm.
- Check supplies and make sure you have the following items: portable radio with fresh batteries, flashlight, first-aid kit, canned or packaged food that can be prepared without cooking or refrigeration, several days' supply of drinking water (one gallon per person, per day), a full tank of gas in your car, and cash.
- Unplug major non-vital appliances. Advanced surge-protection systems will protect your home from most power surges, but will not prevent damage from a direct lightning strike.
- Pay attention to local TV and radio broadcasts for storm position, intensity and expected landfall.
- Prepare for high winds by boarding up or taping windows and other glass, anchoring objects outside, and bracing garage doors.

- Secure boats and trailers on land, and check mooring lines of boats in water.
- Put important papers in watertight containers (take them if you evacuate), and move valuables to upper stories of your home.
- Fill your bathtub with water for sanitary purposes. Because water conducts electricity, it is not safe to run water during a storm.
- If you know someone who relies on electric-powered life-support equipment, be prepared to move that person to a facility outside of the storm's projected path to avoid the risk of an extended power outage.

When a storm hits

- Stay indoors in an inside room away from doors and windows, electrical outlets and water pipes. Don't go out in the brief calm during the eye of the storm.
- Keep TV and radio tuned for information from official sources. Be prepared to evacuate at a moment's notice.
- If you evacuate, shut off gas, water and electricity. (Electricity can be shut off at the breaker box.) Take blankets, first-aid supplies and other essential items with you to the nearest shelter.

After the storm has passed

- Never go near downed power lines. Always assume they are energized and extremely dangerous. If someone suffers an electric shock, call 911 or your local rescue squad immediately. Even minor shocks can cause serious health problems later.
- Check for electrical damage inside your home, such as frayed wires, sparks or the smell of burning insulation. If you find damage, don't turn your power on until an electrician inspects your system and makes necessary repairs.
- Walk and drive cautiously. Watch out for debris-filled streets and weakened bridges. Snakes and insects can be a problem after storms, as well.
- Use your emergency water supply or boil water before drinking it until local officials deem the water supply safe. Report broken sewer or water lines.
- Make temporary repairs to protect property from further damage or looting. Beware of unscrupulous contractors.

If the power goes out

- Call Duke Energy at (800) 228-8485 or report your outage online at www.duke-energy.com/storms. Using these automated systems is the quickest and easiest way for customers to report outages. By entering a phone number or Duke Energy Florida account number, the outage will be recorded in the company's system and included in its restoration plans. Customers can continue to use these resources to get up-to-date information about their outages once restoration times are determined.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. Food usually stays frozen about 48 hours. A refrigerator can keep food cold for about four hours. Remember, when in doubt, throw it out.

- Do not connect a generator directly to your home's electrical system. It's dangerous for you, your neighbors and utility workers. Follow manufacturer's directions regarding connecting appliances directly to your generator.
- In any power outage, utility crews restore service as quickly as possible, starting with the largest lines serving the most people.

For more storm information, visit www.duke-energy.com/storms.

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