

How does PDI respond to Power Outages?

Are you curious about how Peterborough Distribution (PDI) responds to power outages? Do you want to know why some outages are short and some outages take longer to repair? Here are some key facts about power outages.....



Some outages are short and only last for a couple of seconds.

The momentary outages where the power turns off and on within a few seconds can be annoying but are actually meant to happen. A lot of outages are temporary in nature caused by a tree swaying during a storm or an animal touching a line and happen more often in the summer due to the higher storm and animal activity. The electric system will clear the temporary fault and reset the system automatically similar to re-booting a computer that is not operating properly. Otherwise a temporary fault would result in longer duration outages.

If the fault cannot be automatically reset, the source of the fault has to be determined.

PDI has feedback from several substations and switches that tell our Control Room Operator which sections are out of power. We also receive further feedback from our call centre and social media that helps us to focus in on the areas affected. Our crews will patrol the affected line(s) to determine the source of the fault and ensure that it is safe to reenergize the affected areas. Some lines have flashing lights on them that help to narrow the fault location to a smaller area.

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High voltage lines are dangerous. Safety is the first priority.

We sometimes receive calls asking why we haven't turned the power on quicker. Electricity is dangerous. High voltage lines are unforgiving. Any mistake can be fatal. Our crews need to work in a methodical manner in order to ensure that they stay safe. Rest assured that they want the power back on as badly as you do; however they need to work carefully to ensure that they go home to their families at the end of their shift.



What happens during a major storm with multiple outages?

If a major storm is forecasted, our teams will mobilize to ensure that our vehicles are fueled up, batteries charged, and parts are readily available. All of our staff are notified about the oncoming storm and get ready themselves. There is a regular on-call rotation; more workers are called in if the storm starts to cause multiple outages. People are taken from their regular jobs to review damaged areas and prioritize restoration steps.

The PDI Control Centre tends to get quite busy during these larger outages. Our operators utilize hardcopy maps, electronic maps, remote feedback, and other network databases to help them to make decisions about the restoration steps.

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If the magnitude of the storm exceeds our staffing resources, we have mutual assistance agreements that allow us to obtain help from other utilities. In major events, we also have staff assigned to coordinate our response with other emergency responders and municipal agencies.

Our priority is to re-energize the main lines first that feed large sections of customers. We then move onto the smaller neighbourhood lines, and finally onto service lines that feed individual houses.

**If you see downed powerlines:
Stay back the length of a school bus.
Call 911 and your local utility.**



← 10 metres or 33 feet →

How do I keep in touch during power outages?

Our call centre number is 705-748-9300. This number is manned 24 hours a day. More call centre staff is brought in during major outages. PDI also has a social media channel on Twitter (@ptbo_utilities) which is manned by committed staff. Outage updates are provided as soon as accurate information is available.

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What about scheduled outages?

Some outages are planned in advance to allow us to safely replace equipment and make improvements to our system. Some outages are required so that electricians can perform work requested by customers such as replacing service panels or installing solar equipment. We try to schedule these outages to be as short as possible and to affect the least amount of customers as possible.

Some outages are needed to allow for tree trimming if trees are too close to our lines. **Never** attempt to trim trees around powerlines, leave that to the professionals. Please contact us if you have any concerns about trees around our lines.

Affected customers are contacted over the phone or via e-mail in advance of scheduled outages. We sometimes have problems notifying people if their contact information is out of date. If you haven't already done so, please contact us with any updates to your contact information (especially your e-mail address). You can e-mail your updated information to: info@peterboroughutilities.ca

Our staff is dedicated to responding to outages quickly. Your call will be answered 24/7 and Peterborough Utilities staff will work together to get your power back on as quickly as possible while remaining safe. We understand that outages can be a major inconvenience and we work hard to minimize these disruptions to you.

Mike Ploc, Peterborough Distribution Inc.