



Florida Public Service Commission

Consumer Bulletin

Braulio L. Baez, Chairman



Power Outages

Most of us remember the Blackout of 2003 that affected millions of people in New York City and portions of northeastern United States and Canada. Although Florida has not experienced this kind of a blackout, the assurance of reliable electric service is important to the state. At the same time, Florida has experienced power outages and the Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) would like to provide you with information on what causes a power outage and what to do in the case of one.

A report by the PSC's Division of Economic Regulation states that investor-owned utilities regulated by the PSC are required to report statistics of any outage events. This report also highlights statistics of the average time to restore service interruptions and the cause of the outage. The regulated utilities mentioned include:

- ◆ Florida Power and Light
- ◆ Progress Energy Florida, Incorporated
- ◆ Tampa Electric
- ◆ Gulf Power, and
- ◆ Florida Public Utilities Company

The most frequently cited causes of power outages are weather, animals, vegetation and equipment failure; although accidents, including cars, bad connections and "unknowns" were also cited. The average time to restore service for the primary causes of outages ranged from 19 minutes to 3.5 hours. Restoration time includes making sure electrical power is not flowing through downed power lines and procedures for restoring service based on established priorities.

To learn more about power outages, please call your utility company. If, after speaking with your utility company, you still have concerns or general questions about power outages or electric service, please call the Public Service Commission's Division of Consumer Affairs at **1-800-342-3552**. You may also e-mail us at contact@psc.state.fl.us, or visit our Web site 24 hours a day, seven days a week at <http://www.floridapsc.com>. You may also visit our Web site to review our many brochures and reports on electric safety and reliability.

POWER OUTAGE FACTS*

Florida depends on the generation of power. Listed below are facts on what causes power outages and suggestions on what you need to know in the case of a power outage.

- ◆ 67% of all power outages in the nation are caused by the weather. Other contributors of power outages are caused by animals, car accidents, maintenance on utility lines, and human error.
- ◆ Electric companies generally have a detailed plan for restoring electrical service after a power outage. One of the first steps an electric company takes is to make sure that power is no longer flowing through downed lines. Restoration typically is based on priorities which include:
 - Transmission lines and distribution substations because they are the most important lines carrying power from generating plants to large numbers of customers over wide areas.
 - Critical community services such as hospitals, police and fire protection.
 - The largest number of people as soon as possible. Service to neighborhoods, industries and businesses is systematically restored, followed by single residences and small groups of customers until restoration is complete.

TIPS FOR CONSUMERS

Always keep the following handy in case of a power outage:

- ✓ Flashlight and fresh batteries.
- ✓ Battery powered radio.
- ✓ Emergency telephone numbers, including the number to your electric company.
- ✓ Corded or cell telephone.

If an outage occurs, please stay away from downed power lines. Report downed lines to your local electric company.

* Source: The Edison Electric Institute

Braulio L. Baez is the Chairman of the Florida Public Service Commission. The PSC sets the rates regulated utility companies charge for natural gas, electric and telephone service within the state. In 36 counties, it sets the price you pay for the water you drink, if your water company is privately owned.