

Xcel Energy: Prepares for windstorm, offers tips for staying safe

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Eau Claire (Dec. 15, 2021) – With significant winds predicted to hit the Upper Midwest this week, Xcel Energy is staging employees who will work to get the lights back on if customers lose power during the windstorm. We also have tips customers can use to stay safe, report outages and stay informed when severe weather strikes.

Xcel Energy has increased staffing levels and put operational plans in place to make sure key employees, including line workers, are available and able to respond to outages that may occur due to severe weather.

We understand losing power can be a major inconvenience for customers, so we plan and prepare for weather that may cause outages. Xcel Energy crews are ready to quickly and safely restore electric service to customers.

Report your outage

Customers can help Xcel Energy get a jump on power restoration by reporting outages. Customers have several ways to report outages.

- Xcel Energy mobile app available on iOS and Android
- Online at [xcelenergy.com/out](https://www.xcelenergy.com/out)
- Text 'OUT' to 98936 to report an outage, or text STAT to the same number to check the status of a power outage.
- Call **1-800-895-1999** and follow the prompts—the automated phone reporting system lets customers report outages in less than 60 seconds. Once the cause

of the problem is identified, the system or an Xcel Energy representative will provide customers with an estimated restoration time.

Stay informed

If outages occur, it's important for customers to have access to the most recent updates about their power restoration. Customers can stay informed by visiting the [Xcel Energy website](#) or by downloading the mobile app available on iOS and Android. Additionally, the website hosts an [outage map](#) that displays information on the number of customers out and anticipated time for restoration. Customers can also stay informed by following Xcel Energy on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Other ways customers can prepare, stay safe

- **Stay away from downed power lines.** Always assume an electric line, even one that is on or near the ground, is energized and therefore dangerous. Never, under any circumstance, touch or move a downed power line. If you come across a downed power line, leave the area and report it immediately by calling **1-800-895-1999**.
- **Keep natural gas meters clear.** Clearing snow and ice from natural gas meters is key to avoiding the potential for dangerous natural gas buildup indoors due to vents becoming sealed when covered in ice and snow. Xcel Energy strongly recommends keeping the entire meter assembly clear by gently removing snow or ice from the meter, associated piping and the roofline above the meter. Check often to ensure melting snow isn't dripping on the meter from the roof or nearby trees. Use a shovel around a meter to move snow away; do not use a snowblower near a meter.
- **Build a home emergency kit.** Xcel Energy recommends assembling an easily accessible kit that can be used in the event of a power outage. Useful items may include:
 - Xcel Energy phone numbers - 1-800-895-1999 for residential or 1-800-481-4700 for business
 - Battery-powered radio or television
 - Flashlights
 - Batteries
 - Back up phone chargers

- A phone that does not require electricity
- Non-electric alarm clock
- Bottled water and nonperishable food
- Manual can opener
- First aid kit
- Extension cords (for partial outages)
- Manufacturer's instructions on how to manually open power-operated doors (e.g., garage doors)
- **Heating safety.** If using a space heater, take care to ensure safety as more than 65,000 home fires are attributed to heating equipment each year in the United States, according to the Electrical Safety Foundation International. When using a space heater, make sure the heater has the label showing it is listed by a recognized testing laboratory, and read the manufacturer's instructions and warning labels. Additionally, inspect heaters for cracked or broken plugs and connections; don't use it if they are frayed, worn or damaged. Never leave a space heater unattended. Turn it off when leaving a room and don't go to sleep with a space heater on. Additionally, Xcel Energy offers rebates and incentives to install energy efficient furnaces and insulation.
- **Observe food safety.** According to the United States Department of Agriculture, food safety is directly related to the temperature of the food. To maintain refrigerator and freezer temperatures, keep doors closed as much as possible. A full freezer will stay at freezing temperatures for approximately two days and a half-full freezer approximately one day. Visit the [USDA website](#) for more information.