



Line Items

The Official
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PREPARING FOR ELSA

In addition to the frequent summer showers and thunderstorms that we receive each July, this year we were greeted with the threat of a direct hit from a hurricane. Needless to say, July was a wet month here in South Georgia.

In the very early stages of its formation, we knew that there was a good chance that Elsa would be knocking on our front door. Therefore, we began planning right away and preparing for the large amounts of damage that we all know a major hurricane can bring with it. Luckily, however, Elsa had downgraded to a mild tropical storm by the time it reached us and we did not receive any major damage despite being directly in its path. We received our first outage related to Elsa at 3:48 p.m. on Wednesday, July 7th, and our crews had power fully restored by the following morning at 6:34 a.m. The largest number of members without power at one time was 746.

In preparation for Elsa, we brought in additional construction crews from Blue Ridge Mountain EMC and Habersham EMC. We also had our normal contract line crews and right-of-way crews on standby and ready to work if needed. Nine retired or former employees were standing by to assist when needed. Our Excelsior EMC linemen and groundmen worked together in two-man teams in service bucket trucks while the outside construction and right-of-way crews stood by and waited to assist with a broken pole or other major damage. Over the years, this method has proven to be very efficient in restoring power quickly in most outage situations due to the agility of a two-man team and the readiness of a standby construction crew. Thankfully, we were spared any major damage and did not need the additional construction crews or right-of-way crews. Two-man teams worked throughout the night fighting outages one after another. Once again, our guys got the job done.

As your energy provider, we always try to be as prepared as possible for every situation so that you, our members, receive safe and reliable service. However, planning for a hurricane is tricky because it is impossible to know how bad the storm will actually be until it has already come and gone. In the weeks, days, and even hours leading up to the storm, your entire Cooperative is busy preparing. Our management team is monitoring the storm around the clock and meeting frequently in order to make the most informed decisions on how to best prepare. Delivery trucks are bringing extra materials, poles, and fuel so that our warehouse and our trucks are equipped to replace any damaged electrical equipment. Hotel rooms are reserved for all the outside personnel that are arriving to lend us a hand. Food and drinks are coordinated for all line workers so that they have the energy they need to keep working and get the lights on. Our dispatchers are briefed and assigned certain crews to work with on different radio channels to reduce radio traffic and work more efficiently. The IT department ensures that all dispatching and communication equipment is functioning as it should. While storm preparations are being made, the customer service and accounting departments keep day to day business flowing as normal. Whether it's a massive hurricane or a pop-up thunderstorm, we are prepared and ready to work as a team to serve our members to the best of our ability.

We would like to offer a special thanks to Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, Habersham EMC, Pike Electric, Lee Electric, Georgia Right of Way, Kendall Vegetation Services, Eager Beaver Stump and Tree, LLC., and East Georgia Tree Service for being ready and willing to help us get the lights on.



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BRONSON BRAGDON
Editor

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When Your Power is Off – Call (912) 685-2115 or (912) 764-2123

When your power goes off, don't stay in the dark longer than you have to. To restore your power as quickly as possible, we need your correct phone number. Your phone number is the quickest way for us to locate your home or business when you call to report an outage.

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Between the Lines

by
Greg Proctor
President/CEO

Storm Season Preparedness

When major storms knock out power, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed power lines. I would encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during major storms and outages.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness, but you can visit www.ready.gov for additional resources.

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water, and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).
- Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies including towelettes, soap and hand sanitizer.
- Ensure your first aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages, and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.
- Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and portable, battery-powered radio or TV.
- Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible in one location.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers, and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from a power surge and will also help prevent overloading the circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored. If you plan to use a small generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information and check the Excelsior EMC app or website for power restoration updates.

After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs, including on your property.

Advance planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress caused by the weather event, which can lessen the impact of the storm's effects. Sign up for NOAA emergency alerts and warnings. Monitor our outage viewer and Facebook page to stay abreast of power restoration efforts as well as other important co-op information.

Hopefully, we won't have to experience severe storms this season, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. At Excelsior EMC, we recommend that you act today because there is power in planning.



Every Member Counts



THE FIVE CATEGORIES: UNDERSTANDING THE HURRICANE RATING SYSTEM

With Elsa giving us a small taste of storm season, we think it's a good idea to know what to expect when a hurricane is coming. We often hear them categorized, but what do the numbers 1 through 5 mean? According to the National Hurricane Center, the categories are determined by the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale, which assigns hurricanes a rating based solely on a hurricane's maximum sustained wind speed. So, what are the categories, and what do they mean for your family's safety?

CATEGORY

1

These storms have a maximum sustained wind speed of 74 to 95 miles per hour (mph). Your home's roof, shingles, vinyl siding and gutters could be damaged. Tree branches will likely snap, and some shallowly rooted trees may fall. Power outages will likely occur.

CATEGORY

2

These storms have a maximum sustained wind speed of 96 to 110 mph. Homes could sustain major roof and siding damage. Many shallowly rooted trees will be snapped or uprooted and block roads. Because of high winds, near-total power loss is expected, and outages could last from several days to weeks.

CATEGORY

3

These storms have a maximum sustained wind speed of 111 to 129 mph. Homes may incur major damage, including the removal of roof decking and gable ends. Many trees will snap or uproot, blocking numerous roads. Electricity and water could be unavailable for several days to weeks.

CATEGORY

4

These storms have a maximum sustained wind speed of 130 to 156 mph. Homes can sustain severe damage, such as the loss of the roof structure or one or more exterior walls. Most trees in the hurricane's wrath will snap or uproot, and power poles will fall. Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will likely last weeks or possibly months, creating an uninhabitable environment.

CATEGORY

5

These storms produce a sustained wind speed of 157 mph or higher. A high percentage of framed homes will be destroyed, with total roof failure and wall collapse. Like category 4, fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Most of the area will be uninhabitable, and power outages will last for weeks or possibly months.

Although knowing the meaning of these categories is helpful, try not to get too caught up in the classifications. Low category hurricanes and even tropical storms can create billions of dollars' worth of damage to an area and threaten thousands of lives. Although it was only a category 2 when it reached the coast of Georgia, Hurricane Matthew wreaked havoc upon our entire service territory in 2016 and caused the largest outage in Excelsior EMC history.

Always use extreme caution during a major weather event and be sure to follow Excelsior EMC on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for storm safety tips, weather and outage updates, and other important information related to your Cooperative.

KEEP OUR POLES CLEAR & OUR LINEMEN SAFE

Most jobs do not require you to climb 40 feet in the air and conduct business within a few feet of high voltage power lines. However, this is just another day at the office for Excelsior EMC linemen. Although we have an excellent fleet of bucket trucks, oftentimes its necessary to climb poles.

Home security camera technology and usage has spiked tremendously over the last several years and because of that, we are finding an increasing number of cameras on our poles. Although seemingly innocent enough, installing cameras or other items on utility poles creates serious safety hazards. Nails and screws used to secure cameras, as well as the cameras themselves, pose dangers to linemen who must climb poles when either restoring power following storms or while performing routine maintenance to ensure system reliability. Sharp objects like nails and screws can puncture linemen's high voltage gloves. Obstructions attached to poles can cause a lineman's hooks to "cut-out" from a pole and cause a fall.

Unauthorized pole attachments such as lights, cameras, tree stands, balloons, flyers, signs, etc. can hinder a lineman from doing his job in a safe manner. For this very reason, it is against Excelsior EMC's Service Rules and Regulations to attach any personal property to any of the Cooperative's poles. Safety is our top priority and we would like to urge you, our members, to help us keep our linemen safe.



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