

Restoring the Power

A step-by-step guide to how your utility brings customers back on line

Snowstorms, heavy rainfall, strong winds and devastating floods can knock out your power. Restoring power after an outage is a complex job. It involves more than simply throwing a switch or removing a tree from a line.

At Klickitat PUD, the goal is to restore power safely to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible. Sometimes, that results in one neighbor coming back on line before another.

Below is an explanation of how local crews work to restore power after an outage.

If you lose power, please report the outage to KPUD. Please be patient when calling. Because so many people can be affected by an outage, phone lines may be busy.

Step 1: Transmission towers and lines supply power to one or more transmission substations. Without these lines being energized, power cannot be

restored to customers. Since thousands of people can be served by one high-voltage transmission line, damage here must get attention first.

Step 2: With transmission lines down, substations have no power. Each distribution substation serves thousands of customers. When a major outage occurs, distribution substations often are affected. Once a problem can be corrected at the substation level, power may be restored to a large number of people. However, not everyone in the same area will be back on line.

Step 3: If the problem is not at the substation, main distribution supply lines are checked. These lines carry electricity away from the substation to a group of consumers, such as a town or a neighborhood. When power is restored at this stage, all customers served by this supply line could see the lights come on— as long as there is no problem farther down the line.

Step 4: Secondary distribution lines carry power from the main lines to utility poles or underground transformers. Line crews fix these remaining outages based on restoring service to the greatest number of customers at a time. It is a slow, tedious process.

Step 5: Sometimes, damage will occur on the service or “tap” line between your house and the transformer on the nearby pole. This can explain why you have no power, and your neighbor does. If this is the case, you must notify your utility you have an outage so a service crew can repair it. ■



Lineworkers for Klickitat PUD untangled trees from the utility's Glenwood transmission lines after snow and ice in January brought down limbs and whole trees.

