



NEWS RELEASE

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Xcel Energy prepares for winter storm and offers tips for staying safe

Crews prepare for heavy snow and ice this weekend

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (Dec. 15, 2016) –In preparation for a predicted winter storm set to hit western Wisconsin this weekend, Xcel Energy has crews and equipment ready to respond to potential electric outages.

Xcel Energy is known for fast restoration, thanks in part to advance preparation. Crews and equipment are available at service centers throughout the Wisconsin territory to quickly and safely restore electric service.

Stay informed -- Sign up for outage notifications

Snow and ice can cause electrical outages and it's important for customers to know if they are affected. Customers can sign up for outage notifications through the My Account feature on the [Xcel Energy website](#). 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.
 - **Report your outage.** Customers can help Xcel Energy get a jump on power restoration by reporting outages. 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.

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