

Gulf eNews

A Service of Gulf Power Company's Corporate Communications Department

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Gulf Power Company keeps eye on Katrina

Gulf Power Company continues to watch Hurricane Katrina closely and make preparations in case the storm turns toward Northwest Florida. If Katrina makes landfall in the area, customers should be prepared to be without power for an extended period of time.

“We’ve all experienced severe hurricanes in the past year, and Katrina is another dangerous storm,” said company spokesman John Hutchinson. “We want our customers to have realistic expectations. The power is not going to be restored in a just a few days if Katrina comes in as strong as predicted and hits us head on.”

Hutchinson said all of Gulf Power’s 1,400 employees are prepared for storm duty and if Katrina turns back toward Northwest Florida, the utility is prepared to bring in more than 4,000 outside workers to help get the power back on quickly. That’s similar to the number of workers brought in after Dennis last July and Ivan last September.

“Our employees are prepared and we want our customers to be prepared as we track Katrina’s path,” Hutchinson said. “We’ll be out there as soon as possible after the storm makes landfall to restore power quickly whether it’s minimal damage or severe.”

If Katrina does not impact Northwest Florida, Gulf Power is prepared to send work crews to affected areas to the west. That decision will not be made until Katrina makes landfall.

“I would caution everyone in Northwest Florida not to let down their guard. This storm is still way out in the Gulf and small shifts in direction can make a big difference in where it comes ashore,” Hutchinson said. “We are continuing our preparations and we urge everyone else to do likewise.”

For power outages: 1-800-GU-POWER (487-6937)

STORM TIPS FOR CUSTOMERS (www.gulfpower.com)

- Residents who have a life-threatening medical emergency should call 911.
- Turn your air conditioning down to cool down your house. If you keep the doors and windows closed after the storm you can keep your house relatively cool for about 48 hours after the storm.
- Charge up your cell phone before the storm – and anything else that needs to be charged up.
- Stay away from all downed lines. Warn others to do the same and contact Gulf Power or a local law enforcement agency.

- Wait a reasonable time before calling Gulf Power if your entire neighborhood is without power. Please make only one call.
- Keep freezer doors closed and sealed. Well-filled freezers keep most foods frozen two to three days if the door is kept closed.
- ***Do not connect portable generators to your household electrical wiring.*** This can cause serious injury to you and to Gulf Power employees working on the lines in your neighborhood. Connect only essential appliances – such as freezers and refrigerators – directly to the generator.
- ***If your power is off, turn off large appliances and air conditioners and wait 10 to 15 minutes after power has been restored before turning them back on.***
- If there is damage to your meter box or the pole on top of your meter box, you must first have an electrician make repairs before Gulf Power can restore your service.
- If there is flooding in your home or business, Gulf Power may be unable to restore electric service until the building is inspected by city or county code officials.
- Stay away from downed power lines and power equipment. Always assume a downed power line is live; do not attempt to remove tree limbs or anything else caught in power lines. Report downed lines to 800-GU-POWER.
- Please be patient. Gulf Power crews will work as fast as safety allows. Before neighborhood lines can be worked on, Gulf Power crews must first repair larger lines that bring power to neighborhoods.

Questions about something you've read here? Please email or call.

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