

Gulf eNews

A Service of Gulf Power Company's Corporate Communications Department

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More than half Pensacola Bay Area customers lose power

About 57% of Gulf Power Company's Escambia and Santa Rosa counties customers were without power as Hurricane Katrina crossed into Southwest Mississippi at 1 p.m.

"High winds continued to affect Northwest Florida throughout the afternoon, but by 3 p.m. we were able to get out and start assessing damage," said John Hutchinson, company spokesman. "Our crews also have begun restoring power to critical services this afternoon, and will continue to work throughout the night."

Gulf Power expects to have a thorough assessment by early on Tuesday and will have a better prediction of the length of restoration work at that time. Preliminary damage estimates indicate that approximately 117,359 are without power from Escambia to Bay counties, with 109,210 of those in Escambia and Santa Rosa.

"To those customers who have lost power, please be patient. Your safety and our employees' safety is our primary concern as the storm moves through," Hutchinson explained. "As soon as we can assess the extent of the damage, we'll know how big a task we have ahead."

Hutchinson also stated that Gulf Power will send crews toward the hardest hit areas after power has been restored to all Gulf Power customers.

"Our first responsibility is to our customers," said Hutchinson, "but we know what it's like to suffer a direct hit from a hurricane, and to be helped out by neighboring utilities. It's only right that as soon as we can, we return the favor to those who have been so willing to help us in our times of need."

Outages by county are:

Escambia	83,573	Santa Rosa	25,637
Okaloosa	7,289	Walton	32
Bay	818	Washington	1
Holmes	9	Jackson	0

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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