

## **CenterPoint Energy assessing damage, beginning to restore service following Hurricane Nicholas**

- *Keep phone lines open for electric and natural gas emergency calls only*
- *Estimated electric restoration times will be provided once assessments are completed*
- *Natural gas system in Houston area is functioning normally*
- *Gas Operations crews have begun system assessment where the storm has passed*

**Houston – Sept. 14, 2021** – In response to Hurricane Nicholas’ impact on its electric and natural gas systems in Greater Houston and surrounding communities, CenterPoint Energy has issued the following update:

As of 7:30 a.m. CT, there are approximately 440,000 customers without power. The storm intensified overnight with strong sustained winds that exceeded more than 75 miles per hour and gusts over 90 miles per hour, resulting in widespread outages throughout CenterPoint Energy’s service area. The most significant impact has been on the company’s southern, central and eastern service areas.

CenterPoint Energy’s crews have begun their damage assessment and service restoration process. The restoration process begins with facilities vital to safety, health and welfare, such as hospitals, water treatment plants and public service facilities. After key facilities, the company follows its priority restoration process by making repairs to electrical facilities that will return power to the largest number of customers first, then continue the restoration process by prioritizing repairs to benefit the greatest number of customers, until power is returned to everyone.

“We are committed to restoring service to our customers as safely and quickly as possible. However, patience will be important as some areas of our system and equipment may be difficult to reach for our crews due to safety-related issues, such as downed trees,” said Kenny Mercado, Executive Vice President, Electric Utility of CenterPoint Energy. “Customers do not need to call us to report outages, our smart meters tell us which customers are out. We ask that everyone to please keep phone lines open for electric or natural gas emergency calls only.”

In addition, CenterPoint Energy is part of electric utility mutual assistance programs that provide access to thousands of linemen and tree trimmers from around the country to support restoration efforts during widespread power outage emergencies. The company has requested mutual assistance crews to assist with restoration efforts and is prepared to activate four or more staging sites across Houston.

Scott Doyle, Executive Vice President, Natural Gas, said, “Our natural gas distribution system in the Greater Houston area is functioning normally; however, crews are responding to natural gas leak calls primarily due to toppled trees which have uprooted gas lines.

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“Customers need to call us if they smell natural gas or see a damaged line,” he added. “Gas Operations crews have begun system assessment system where the storm has passed and it’s safe to do so.”

For latest information on power outages\*:

- Sign up for [Power Alert Service](#) for information on individual outages;
- Follow [@cnpalerts](#) and visit [Outage Tracker](#) for general outage locations; and
- Visit [CenterPointEnergy.com/StormCenter](#) for electric and natural gas safety tips and other resources.

*\*Please note that some outage notifications may be delayed. Due to the unpredictable nature of Hurricane Nicholas, estimated restoration times on Outage Tracker and Power Alert Service are not being provided at this time.*

The company urges the public to follow these important electric and natural gas safety tips:

### **Electric**

- Stay away from downed power lines. Be especially mindful of downed lines that could be hidden in flood waters and treat all downed lines as if they are energized.
- If you experience flooding and water has risen above the electrical outlets in your home, contact a licensed electrician before turning on the main circuit breaker or trying to restore power.
- All electrical appliances and electronic equipment that have been submerged in water need to dry thoroughly for at least one week. Then, have them checked by a qualified repair person before turning them on. Attempting to repair a flood-damaged appliance could result in electrical shock or death. Attempting to restart it could result in further damage and costly repairs.
- If the outside unit of an air conditioning system has been under water, mud and water may have accumulated in the controls. Have the unit checked by a qualified air conditioning technician.

### **Natural Gas**

- Do not turn off your natural gas service at the meter; doing so could allow water to enter the natural gas lines.
- Be alert for the smell of natural gas. If you smell gas, leave the area immediately and tell others to leave, too.



- If you smell gas, do not turn the lights on or off, smoke, strike a match, use a cell phone or operate anything that might cause a spark, including a flashlight or a generator.
- Do not attempt to turn natural gas valves on or off. Once safely away from the area, call 911 and CenterPoint Energy at 888-876-5786 and the company will send a trained service technician.
- If your home was flooded, call a licensed plumber or gas appliance technician to inspect your appliances and gas piping to make sure they are in good operating condition before calling CenterPoint Energy to reconnect service. This includes outdoor gas appliances including pool heaters, gas grills and gas lights.
- Before cleaning debris, digging on your property or to locate underground natural gas lines and other underground utility lines, call 811, the nationwide Call Before You Dig number.
- Be aware of where your natural gas meter is located. As debris is put out for heavy trash pickup, make sure it is placed away from the meter. In many areas the meter may be located near the curb. If debris is near a gas meter, the mechanized equipment used by trash collectors could pull up the meter, damaging it and causing a potentially hazardous situation. If this happens, leave the area immediately and call CenterPoint Energy at 888-876-5786.

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