



North Carolina Telecommunications Industry Association

Consumer Tips for Power Outages

The North Carolina Telecommunications Industry Association (NCTIA) and its member companies want you to be ready with a list of things that you can do as a customer to prepare and in case of a major power outage (whether from an ice storm or hurricane). The NCTIA and its member companies urge customers to take the appropriate steps to ensure they are prepared.

- Each home should have at least one conventional wired phone at home. Traditional wireline phones generally continue to operate during commercial power outages because a local phone company can power its switching equipment with mobile generators and backup batteries. Cordless phones, however, need a base that plugged into an electrical outlet. If the power goes out, then a cordless phone won't work.
- During inclement weather, phones should only be used for emergency or essential calls. Severe weather strains the availability of telephone circuits, and heavy call volumes can slow down dial tones. If you pick up your phone and don't receive a dial tone right away, hang up and try your call again in a few minutes. Don't jiggle the switch hook because that adds to transmission congestion. Remember, it is important that phone lines remain open for law enforcement, fire, medical, rescue, and other emergency personnel. You may need to call 911 yourself. NCTIA encourages phone users dialing loved ones to make these contacts as brief as possible. Doing so help avoid overburdening phone systems, including backup batteries.
- Have an out-of-state family member or friend as your point of contact. This will allow everyone to have a single point of reference and will also cut down on calls in the networks local area.
- If your wireline phone service is disrupted, contact your local service provider only once to report the damage. After a hurricane passes through, your local phone provider will immediately begin to survey the damage and prioritize the needed repairs.
- Make sure cell phones are charged and available for backup. Keep an extra battery charged, if one is available. Also keep your car charger accessible, in case a cell phone needs to be charged and the power is out. Make sure your cell phone stays out of the elements and as dry as possible. Remember, wireless networks, too, should be kept open for emergency communications. Keep in mind that interruption of wireline service and commercial power also could affect wireless calls.

If a storm threatens North Carolina's telecommunications industry, NCTIA member companies will activate extra personnel and deploy additional equipment, including auxiliary generators, extensive supplies of telephone cable, utility poles and other

service restoration materials. They will gas up service vehicles, set up command centers and continually monitor weather forecasts and local transmission facilities. After the hurricane weather subsides, damage assessment teams will inspect landline and wireless networks. Repair crews and support personnel will work around the clock until everything returns to normal.

The telcos also assist state, federal and local disaster recovery efforts by providing portable payphones, calling cards, wireless phones and other communications to emergency management authorities and at local shelters, should the need arise.

NCTIA is a trade organization representing carriers certified by the N.C. Utilities Commission to provide telecommunications services to the citizens of North Carolina. Founded in 1932, the organization advocates for the telecom industry, offers education and training opportunities for its member companies and supports a pro-business environment for growth and economic development across the state.