Plans underway as Rhode Island Energy prepares for another winter storm

Company secures additional line and forestry workers to assist with restoration efforts; encourages customers to stay connected and be prepared for potential outages.

PROVIDENCE, RI *(January 9, 2024)* – Rhode Island Energy (RIE) has been closely monitoring the forecasts for yet another severe wind and rain storm, which will arrive in New England later today. Current models indicate the storm could cause damage to the electrical system, with winds potentially gusting over 60 mph and rainfall amounts measuring between 2 and 4 inches. The storm is expected to make its way out of the region by Wednesday afternoon.

“These wind forecasts that could last an extended period of time are a bit concerning with this storm. Couple that with significant rainfall on an already oversaturated ground, and we know that there will be outages,” said Dave Bonenberger, president of Rhode Island Energy. “For that reason, we are preparing accordingly and have secured hundreds of additional line and forestry workers to assist with the restoration efforts.”

RIE will be ready to respond to outages with over 2,200 personnel providing both field-based and back-office emergency response operations across the region. This includes overhead line, forestry, contractors, underground, wires-down, transmission, substation, municipal liaisons and call center staff. Crews will be staged across the state and ready to respond once the storm arrives Tuesday evening. RIE will also be coordinating its response with state agencies and municipalities to address potential outages in a safe and efficient manner.

“We’re just coming off a storm that dumped several inches of snow across the state, but we want customers to know our teams and the emergency personnel across the state will be ready to respond as safely and efficiently as possible,” Bonenberger added. “We would also encourage customers to be prepared. Like the storm we saw before Christmas, this one may require a multi-day restoration effort.”

As Rhode Island Energy continues to prepare for the storm, we are offering the following tips and reminders to our customers:

Customers Should Stay Connected:

- Report power outages at RIEnergy.com or call 855-743-1102.
- Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, where we will post the latest storm and restoration updates.
- Track outages and estimated restoration times online at: www.rienergy.com/RI-Home/outage-central/.
- Sign up for alerts. To stay connected and receive outage updates text REG to 743688.
    - Once registered, to report an outage, text OUT to 743688
    - To check the status of your outage, text STAT to 743688

Stay Safe:

- If you encounter a downed wire at any time, assume it’s energized and stay away. If you see one, report it immediately to RIE or your local emergency response organization.
- Power problems can sometimes interrupt public water supply systems or disable well pumps, so it’s an especially good idea to keep a supply of bottled drinking water handy, as well as some canned food.
- People who depend on electric-powered life support equipment, such as a respirator, should let us know. To register as a life support customer, call the company’s Customer Service Center at 1-855-743-1101.
- Check on elderly family members, neighbors and others who may need assistance during an outage period.
- Make sure your mobile devices are fully charged.

Electric Safety:

- If you use a generator to supply power during an outage, be sure to operate it outdoors.
- Before operating generators, disconnect from RIE’s system by shutting off the main breaker located in the electric service panel. Failure to do this could jeopardize the safety of line crews and the public.
- If you lose power, turn off any appliances that were on when the power went off, but leave one light on so you know when power is restored.

- Just in case you lose power, it's good to have an emergency kit on hand with food, water, medication, and any pet supplies you may need.
- Remember that candles can start fires. If you lose power, use flashlights instead.
- Avoid opening your refrigerator and freezer as much as possible. Most foods in the fridge and freezer should last between 12-24 hours.
- For your safety and ours, please keep a safe distance from our crews.

Gas Safety:

If you suspect a natural gas leak:

- Get Out - All occupants should leave the house immediately. Do not use the telephone or light switches for any reason.
- Call Us – After leaving the house and reaching a safe environment, call 911. RIE has a 24-hour gas emergency number: 1-800-640-1595.
- Stay Out - Do not return to your home until Rhode Island Energy tells you it is safe. Customers are encouraged to learn more by visiting https://www.rienergy.com/RI-Home/.

About Rhode Island Energy

Rhode Island Energy provides essential energy services to over 770,000 customers across Rhode Island through the delivery of electricity or natural gas. Our team of 1,300 employees is dedicated to helping Rhode Island customers and communities thrive, while supporting the transition to a cleaner energy future. Rhode Island Energy is part of the PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL) family of companies addressing energy challenges head-on by building smarter, more resilient and more dynamic power grids and advancing sustainable energy solutions. For more information visit www.RIEnergy.com and stay connected on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

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https://news.pplweb.com/Plans-underway-as-Rhode-Island-Energy-prepares-for-another-winter-storm