

Widespread Damage, Poor Road Conditions Hamper PPL Electric Utilities' Recovery Efforts

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ALLENTOWN, Pa.

PPL Electric Utilities is working around the clock to restore power to customers whose electricity was disrupted by yesterday's snow and ice storm.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/19981015/PPTH025>)

Because the damage is so widespread and road conditions are only beginning to improve, it will take an extended period of time for service to be fully restored in all locations of the company's service territory, said Robert Gombos, vice president-Field Services for PPL Electric Utilities.

"We're making progress in making repairs, but it may be until early Saturday before service is back to everyone," Gombos said. "Customers may wish to consider staying at a hotel or with friends or relatives until we can make repairs. PPL has been in touch with local officials about setting up emergency shelters where necessary."

As of 4 a.m., service had been restored to 95,000 customers. Another 55,000 customers were still without power.

PPL Electric Utilities has dispatched a number of line crews to repair downed wires. Vacation leave was canceled for employees essential to storm restoration. In addition, PPL called in office and management personnel to staff its customer call centers.

PPL has brought in 25 crews of contractors to repair downed power lines in the hardest hit areas.

Additionally PPL has been in touch with eight other electric utilities in surrounding areas to ask for assistance. However, many of them also are dealing with storm-related outages.

"We have commitments from Niagara Mohawk, which is based in Syracuse, N.Y., to send 30 crews first thing this morning," Gombos said. "Several other utilities are assessing their situation before deciding whether to dispatch crews to assist us."

The weather has been a factor in getting crews to outage sites. Some major interstate highways are still closed, and many local roads are impassable. Because the roads are so slippery, getting to outage sites safely takes longer than usual.

PPL has been tracking storm conditions to help with planning and deployment of crews.

Customers can report power outages 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling a toll-free customer service number: 1-800-342-5775 (1-800-DIAL PPL). The customer call center is fully staffed. If customers can't get through, they should keep trying.

PPL Electric Utilities serves 1.3 million customers in 29 counties in central and eastern Pennsylvania.

PPL Electric Utilities is a subsidiary of PPL Corporation. Headquartered in Allentown, Pa., PPL Corporation controls about 11,500 megawatts of generating capacity in the United States, sells energy in key U.S. markets and delivers electricity to customers in Pennsylvania, the United Kingdom and Latin America.

Note to Editors: Visit PPL's media Web site at www.pplnewsroom.com for additional news and background about the corporation and its subsidiaries. Up- to-date storm outage statistics are available online for your area. Click on the "Storm Outage" link at the top left of the PPL Newsroom home page.

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