

PPL Electric Service Remains Reliable through Heat Wave

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PPL Electric Utilities has maintained reliable service to its 1.3 million customers throughout the heat wave that has baked the Northeast for the past 10 days.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/19981015/PHTH025>)

Electricity use by PPL Electric Utilities did not set a summer record Tuesday (7/2). Highest usage Tuesday was about 6,400 megawatt-hours between noon and 1 p.m. The company's summer record for electricity use is 6,675 megawatt-hours, set Aug. 7, 2001.

To help maintain reliable service, PPL Electric Utilities -- at the request of the regional PJM Interconnection -- has asked a group of industrial customers with special rate contracts to reduce electricity use this afternoon.

These customers are able to buy electricity throughout the year at a lower price than standard industrial rates in exchange for agreeing to cut back on their use temporarily when needed to preserve reliable service.

As a result of that action to reduce electricity use, PPL Electric Utilities does not expect to set a summer record today.

"The important thing for our customers is reliability. We have continued to deliver electricity that our customers need even with several days of temperatures in the 90s," noted Robert D. Grover, manager of Transmission and Distribution Operations for PPL Electric Utilities.

Grover said PPL Electric Utilities maintains its system to handle the increased customer demand during heat waves, and the employees who operate the 37,000-mile transmission and distribution system are highly trained and certified by electric reliability organizations.

As another way to help ensure reliability, PJM and PPL Electric Utilities suggest that customers use electricity wisely, particularly between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., when the demand for electricity is highest.

Some simple things residential customers can do include:

- Set air conditioner thermostats at 78 degrees if health permits.
- Turn off TVs, computers and other appliances not in use.
- Close curtains, blinds or shutters to keep out the sun.
- Use major appliances -- such as washing machines, clothes dryers, dishwashers and electric ranges -- in the evening or morning, when demand for electricity is lower.

While PPL Electric Utilities did not set an electricity-use record Tuesday, the PJM Interconnection did. In the original five-state area served by PJM, electricity use was about 54,400 megawatt-hours Tuesday afternoon, breaking the old record of 54,176 set on Aug. 9, 2001.

With the addition since last summer of service areas in western Pennsylvania, western Maryland, and parts of West Virginia and Ohio, electricity use across PJM reached more than 62,000 megawatts Tuesday.

PJM, based in Valley Forge, Pa., operates the world's largest competitive wholesale electricity market and the largest power grid in North America.

PPL Electric Utilities, a subsidiary of Allentown-based PPL Corporation, serves 1.3 million customers in 29 counties of eastern and central Pennsylvania. PPL Corporation controls or owns more than 10,000 megawatts of generating capacity in the United States, sells energy in key U.S. markets, and delivers electricity to nearly 6 million customers in Pennsylvania, the United Kingdom and Latin America.

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