



Rotating Outages FAQs

What are rotating outages?

Rotating outages are controlled, temporary interruptions of electrical service, initiated by ERCOT, the state grid operator, when the power needed to run the statewide grid is not matched by the power being provided by generation companies. In these situations, ERCOT instructs utilities to reduce consumer demand on the grid by conducting temporary outages at the local distribution level.

When do rotating outages occur?

Rotating outages are the last step in a progressive series of emergency procedures that ERCOT follows according to reliability rules. We only call for rotating outages as a final fail-safe measure to avoid an uncontrolled blackout across the entire state.

What areas will be affected if rotating outages are needed?

Call your local electric company or distribution provider to see what areas may be affected in the event of rotating outages. ERCOT does not have that information. As the operator for the statewide bulk transmission grid, we determine the amount of load curtailment needed to maintain stability of the grid, but we have no control over how those outages are implemented by the utilities on the local distribution grid.

Who do consumers call about outage issues?

If you are a consumer experiencing difficulties with electricity at your home, you need to call the transmission / distribution service provider listed on your electric bill – not the retail electric provider. You can also call the Public Utility Commission consumer hotline at 1-888-782-8477 for assistance or to register a complaint.

Why were rotating outages needed the first week of February?

The ERCOT region experienced a loss of more than 7,000 MW in available generation during the early morning hours of Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2011. The forecast for the amount of electricity that would be needed as extreme cold weather hit the state was on target, but more than 50 power generating units that were expected to be available failed to come online or stay online, and others that were running were unable to produce at their full capacity because of complications from the weather. ERCOT operators instructed transmission providers to implement their emergency plans by reducing a total of 4,000 MW of firm load.

Although many consumers were significantly inconvenienced by the loss of their power, and other consumers sacrificed in order to conserve electricity during the crisis, these actions helped to preserve the security of the bulk transmission grid and avert what could have been a disastrous statewide blackout.

For more information:

- [External Communications Procedures for Emergency Events](http://www.ercot.com/content/news/presentations/2011/Energy%20Emergency%20Alert%20Communications%20Matrix%20Feb%202011.pdf) (http://www.ercot.com/content/news/presentations/2011/Energy%20Emergency%20Alert%20Communications%20Matrix%20Feb%202011.pdf)
- [ERCOT news releases](http://www.ercot.com/news/press_releases/) (http://www.ercot.com/news/press_releases/)
- [Conservation tips on the PUC site](http://puc.state.tx.us/ocp/conserves/index.cfm) (http://puc.state.tx.us/ocp/conserves/index.cfm)

Contact numbers

To report a local power outage.....Call the transmission provider number on your electric bill
 PUC Consumer Hotline / or file complaint about an electric provider PUC 888-782-8477
 ERCOT Client Services for market participants..... 248-3900, ClientServices@ercot.com
 ERCOT Government / Legislative Relations.... Shelly Botkin, 512-225-7177; Theresa Gage, 512-225-7074
 Media.....Dottie Roark, 512-225-7014, droark@ercot.com