

How is Power Restored

After Jackson Electric's line superintendent evaluates where the most damage is done to the system, he dispatches crews to those areas. We try to fix issues that will restore power to the most members at one time.

1. Distribution substations are checked. If the problem can be corrected at the substation, power is restored to hundreds of members at one time.
2. If there is a transmission line fault, Jackson Electric's crews work with either Dairyland Power Cooperative or Xcel Energy crews to restore power. High voltage transmission lines carry large amounts of electricity. They rarely fail but must be repaired first.
3. Three-phase distribution lines are repaired. These are larger main distribution lines (three power lines with one neutral line) that service many businesses, residences, and some farms. These lines must be repaired before moving on.
4. Main feeder lines are also checked and repaired before moving on. These are lines that carry electricity from the substation to the distribution points.
5. After the main line repairs are complete, the tap lines to residences and businesses are inspected and repaired. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service.

Power Restoration Q/A

Is there a priority list or schedule of areas where the crew is working?

The only priority list is starting in the area where we can get the most members on. That begins with either repairs in our substation or the three-phase distribution lines. Once the three-phase lines are repaired, we can move on.

Our line crew is dispatched from a map which is divided into sections. Crews are dispatched to the sections that have the most damage and work to restore power in that section before moving on.

I understand how hard this is, but it's also hard making a decision when we don't have time estimates for specific townships and localities.

It's nearly impossible for us to give a time estimate for power restoration especially after a storm. There can be damage to the infrastructure and equipment that can take time to repair. Depending on the terrain, we may have to climb poles or walk several miles to check lines. This takes time. The outside elements can also impact power restoration efforts.

If we stated a two-hour power restoration, and in reality, it took us four-hours, members would not be satisfied with us either.

Perhaps asking for a little more assistance might be worth a try.

We set an outage threshold that is used before requesting mutual aid from the Restoration of Power in an Emergency (ROPE) program. When the December 2022 storm hit, we hit our threshold, but assistance was not available due to the number of power outages other electric cooperatives were dealing with.

Contact the governor for assistance or bring in the National Guard.

To be clear, the State of Wisconsin does not have individuals either through the National Guard or within state government such as journey linemen with the expertise and training to assist in providing power restoration services. Linemen also require special vehicles and equipment to work on powerlines due to the electric hazards associated with this work. While the state may have similar types of equipment, I am not aware of any equipment the state maintains specifically to work on powerline infrastructure. Allowing improperly trained or unqualified persons to work on or near powerlines is a serious safety concern and is prohibited by OSHA. – *Tim Clay, VP of Operations, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association*

Our power was restored, then went out again.

Unfortunately, that sometimes happens. Chances are that something fell on to the power line that didn't clear, causing the second power outage.

The line is just laying there. No trees on it, right next to the road for all to see. Be nice to get these easy ones done and out of the way.

Unless you have been through the courses to become a lineman, we don't believe you have the ability to accurately determine if this would be an easy fix. There's more to just putting a wire back on the pole and magically have electricity.

We're still out tonight. This is getting ridiculous. I know they are doing the best they can, but I'm seriously over this.

Our crews do the best that they can given the circumstances they're working in. Many of our employees were without power during the December 2022 snowstorm, and they left their families to restore power to your homes. It's frustrating for everyone involved.

We're losing pipes and all our food and we're seniors.

If you are concerned about your home, food, and/or need electricity to operate a medical device, it is in your best interest to purchase a standby generator. If you can't afford a generator, it is recommended you have an alternative plan in the event of another lengthy outage. Jackson Electric cannot control the weather and our infrastructure is vulnerable to the elements.

Why don't you do a better job at rights-of-way maintenance?

We have a very aggressive rights-of-way maintenance program in which we can trim trees up to 15 feet on both sides of the power line. The trees and branches that fall onto the power lines are outside of Jackson Electric's rights-of-way. Those trees are the responsibility of the landowner.

Why don't you give us more updates and why can't I talk to a "real" person?

We can reach the most number of members through Facebook, Instagram, and the local radio station, WWIS. Because we don't have many staff, we do switch our phones over to our after-hours call center to assist in handling the calls.