

Procedures for Reporting Electric Outages by Utilities to the Public Utility Commission of Texas

The Commission's rule relating to electric reliability and continuity of service, 16 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) § 25.52, addresses reporting requirements for electric utilities when significant interruptions occur. These procedures describe the process by which electric utilities must report these interruptions. Electric cooperatives and municipally owned utilities are strongly encouraged to voluntarily report significant interruptions to the Commission consistent with these procedures. In the event of an activation of the State Operations Center, additional reporting may be requested by the Commission staff under 16 TAC § 25.53(f) and (h)(7).

Significant Interruption

Significant interruption is defined by 16 TAC §25.52(c)(5) as "An interruption of any classification lasting one hour or more and affecting the entire system, a major division of the system, a community, a critical load, or service to interruptible customers; and a scheduled interruption lasting more than four hours that affects customers that are not notified in advance. A significant interruption includes a loss of service to 20% or more of the system's customers, or 20,000 customers for utilities serving more than 200,000 customers. A significant interruption also includes interruptions adversely affecting a community such as interruptions of governmental agencies, military bases, universities and schools, major retail centers, and major employers." An electric cooperative or municipally owned utility reporting outages voluntarily consistent with these procedures, may rely on its internal communication guidelines and processes in determining whether a loss of a portion of its system constitutes a significant interruption.

Reporting Requirements

Commission staff should be notified via email to outages@puc.texas.gov of an agreement, or the end of an agreement, that one utility will report significant interruption information for another utility.

An electric utility must notify the Commission as soon as reasonably possible after it has determined that a significant interruption has occurred on its system, even if the utility does not have all of the information listed below at that time. The notice must be sent via email to outages@puc.texas.gov, and must include:

- the utility's contact information;
- the general locations affected by the interruption;
- the approximate number of the utility's retail customers (meters) that are affected;
- the approximate amount of load in megawatts that is affected, if known;
- the cause, if known;
- the time that the interruption began;
- the estimated time until restoration of service;
- whether local authorities and media are aware of the event; and
- the following information if the utility's service to wholesale customers is interrupted:
 - each affected wholesale point of delivery (POD), if known;
 - each affected wholesale customer associated with each affected POD, if known;
 - outage contact information for each affected wholesale customer, if known; and

- the approximate number of retail customers of each wholesale customer connected to each affected POD or the approximate number of retail customer outages associated with that POD for each affected wholesale customer, if known and if the wholesale provider and customer agreed that the provider would report the information.

The notice should be promptly updated if not all the information listed above was included in the initial notification. If the duration of the interruption is greater than 24 hours, the electric utility must update this information at least daily. Commission staff may also request more frequent updates or additional information. Updates to this information must also be sent to the “Outages” email address.

If the interruption lasts longer than 24 hours, the electric utility is required to file a summary report with the Commission within five working days after the end of the interruption. This report must be filed in the appropriate project number, which will be created by the Emergency Management (EM) Coordinator for each calendar year. The current project number for calendar year 2020 is 50517. The EM Coordinator will set up a new project for each subsequent year and update this document with the new project number.

If you have any questions about these requirements, you can email emc@puc.texas.gov.