

Be power prepared this bushfire and storm season

The company responsible for keeping the power on has released a new campaign aimed at helping people get ready for summer and prepare for inevitable summer storms and the threat of bushfires.

With wild weather already causing swathes of damage across the network, which covers 95 per cent of NSW and parts of Southern Queensland, and more predicted with the current La Nina weather event, Essential Energy is appealing for households and businesses to be prepared.

Mid North Coast Operations Manager, Mat Reedy, said that it's important that customers are prepared in case they lose power during an extreme weather event this summer.

"Over the next few months, we're expecting more frequent and extreme weather events that usually lead to power outages. In the last few weeks, we've already seen trees and even water tanks being blown into powerlines along with lightning strikes on the network."

Specific power-related storm and bushfire safety advice has been updated on Essential Energy's website.

"Our strongest message for getting through power outages is to prepare. Think about how a power outage will affect you and your family and put together a plan so that if the lights do go out you know what to do," Mr Reedy said.

Essential Energy has shared the following tips to help guide customers when making their plans:

- Know where your Neighbourhood Safer Place is (see www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/neighbourhood-safer-places)
- Ensure at least 24 hours of drinking water is available for all household members. Power may remain on at your home, but electricity supply to municipal water supply pumps may be impacted.
- Purchase a battery powered AM/FM radio and change the batteries regularly so you can receive news and emergency broadcasts.
- Have at least one torch and ensure new batteries are available.
- Test the operation of any backup petrol or diesel water pumps and generators well before you need them. Generators are a good backup for items like fridges and freezers, and for those in your family who may rely on medical devices.
- Ensure that you know how to bypass or manually operate electric gates, electric locks and garage doors on your property. You may wish to turn off the power and practice when the weather is cool.
- Ensure your electricity retailer has your current mobile number so we can contact you by SMS.
- Stay away from fallen powerlines, and report them immediately to 13 20 80.

"Safety is our number one priority, which is why we've put together these handy tips to support our customers when experiencing a power outage.

"During a storm or severe weather, customers should also unplug electronic equipment like televisions and computers and stay indoors. If possible, listen to local emergency radio stations and check social media for updates. Leave one light on so that you know when the power's back on."

"Always assume fallen powerlines or any objects in contact with them are live and stay at least eight metres away," Mr Reedy added.

"We know that despite our best efforts, the forces of nature sometimes surprise us with events that interrupt power supply, especially during summer."

Customers can find information about specific areas impacted by power outages and current expected power restoration at www.essentialenergy.com.au/outages-and-faults or contacting us on 13 20 80.

FACT FILE:

- **Essential Energy builds, operates and maintains one of Australia's largest electricity distribution networks, servicing more than 870,000 customers across regional, rural and remote NSW and parts of southern Queensland.**
- **Our footprint covers 95 percent of NSW, traversing 737,000 square kilometres of landmass with 183,612 km of powerline, 163,417 of those in designated bushfire zones.**
- **The network services approximately 5.1 customers to each kilometre of powerline, which is almost one-tenth the customer density compared with our counterparts in NSW.**
- **Essential Energy's footprint also includes 1.38 million power poles, equating to 1.6 power poles per customer.**

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