

Louisiana’s Electric Co-ops Launch Damage Assessments, More than 100,000 Electric Co-op Consumers Without Power

For Immediate Release

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BATON ROUGE (August 27, 2020) – Hurricane Laura made landfall in southwest Louisiana early Thursday morning, causing extensive damage to the electric systems of several local electric cooperatives and leaving many consumer-members without power.

As of 10 a.m., over 100,000 electric co-op consumers are without electricity due to fallen wires, damaged poles, and severe flooding.

“Hurricane Laura the worst storm to hit southwest Louisiana with damaging winds and significant flooding. In preparation for the storm, the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives (ALEC) worked with our mutual-aid network to recruit help from line workers from other states to assist in the recovery, ” said ALEC CEO Jeff Arnold.

“The recovery and rebuilding effort will take time. Laura’s storm surge was significant, and the extreme floodwaters will complicate the restoration process. As conditions allow, electric co-ops are conducting damage assessments – a key first step to developing a roadmap to getting the lights back on as soon as possible.”

The damage assessment process allows electric cooperatives to strategically target power restoration efforts. These damage assessments must be completed before a co-op can generate an estimated restoration time for its members.

Once preliminary damage assessments are completed and it is safe to dispatch work crews, impacted co-ops will work around the clock to restore power as quickly as possible.

At this time, we have commitments for mutual-aid assistance from Arkansas, Alabama, Oklahoma. In addition, Louisiana electric cooperatives will send crews to assist harder hit areas of Louisiana once recovery of their systems are complete.

The Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives urges consumer-members to stay safe in the wake of the storm, as conditions remain hazardous in many areas. Consumers are encouraged to follow the following safety tips:

- Stay away from downed wires. Always assume they are energized. Contact the co-op to report downed wires or an outage.
- Avoid flooded areas. Flooding is a major threat from Hurricane Laura. Flash flooding can occur suddenly due to intense rainfall. Long-term flooding along rivers and streams can persist for days following a storm. When approaching water on a roadway, remember: Don't Drown. Turn Around.
- Avoid crews working in the street. This will keep you and the crews safe and allow them to work on restoring your power.
- If you plan to use a portable generator, follow the manufacturer's instructions and use only when necessary. Don't overload it and turn it off at night when you're asleep or if you leave your home.
- To avoid the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, place portable generators outside in a well-ventilated area, more than 20 feet away from your home, doors and windows. Never run a generator inside, not even in your garage. Do not connect the generator directly into your home's main fuse box or circuit panel.
- Protect food and refrigerated medicine with ice in an insulated cooler. If you are without power for more than two hours, refrigerated foods should be placed in a cooler. Foods will stay frozen for 36 to 48 hours in a fully loaded freezer if the door remains closed, and a half-full freezer will generally keep frozen foods for up to 24 hours. Check [foodsafety.gov](https://www.foodsafety.gov) to learn more about when to throw out or keep food after a power outage.
- Turn off power to flood-prone basement appliances if it is safe to do so. However, if you have an electric sump pump, you should not turn off the power in your basement.
- Tune in to local news broadcasts for the latest weather and emergency information.



Our Louisiana electric cooperatives serve over 1 million customers in 50 parishes in Louisiana.