Reporting an Outage

It is 8 p.m., you are settled into your favorite chair to watch your favorite television show, and your lights blink. Then they blink again. They blink a third time, and the power goes off. Five minutes pass, and you’re not too concerned; 15 minutes pass, and you decide to tell someone. How do you report your outage?

Call Your Service Center
Volunteer Energy’s Central Dispatch Control Center is staffed 24 hours a day. Whether it is 8 p.m. or 3 a.m., a dispatcher monitors real-time service on our power grid. Each of our Central Dispatch staff works hand in hand with service area managers to monitor and diagnose problems. The dispatchers utilize state-of-the-art monitoring systems, including the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) and Outage Management System (OMS). Our Integrated Voice Response System (IVR) can confirm outages and give updated information 24 hours each day in addition to the Dispatch Control Center.

Along with the IVR and Central Dispatch, our Contact Center is open for extended business hours: Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. EST and Saturday 8 a.m.-noon EST. “Volunteer Energy, how may I help you?” is a phrase repeated often in the Central Dispatch Center as representatives answer calls from the 17 counties served by Volunteer Energy.

Use VEC.org or the Smart Hub App
You can also report your outage by signing into your account at www.vec.org or using the Smart Hub App. The app and the website are connected to the OMS system and update the dispatch center in real time.

Do Not Report Using Social Media
Do not report outages using social media. Our social media pages are not monitored 24/7 and are not connected to OMS. Your outage will not be recorded if you report using social media. During large or extended outages, social media will be used to provide progress updates.

Update Your Phone Number
Whether you report your outage via SmartHub, on the website or by phone, remember to update your phone number. Without a current phone number, VEC personnel cannot reach you to verify or provide outage-detection information.

Volunteer Energy Service Center Phone Numbers

VEC Installs Electric Vehicle Chargers in Byrdstown/Jamestown

In partnership with a Tennessee Tech research project and Seven States Power Corporation, VEC installed a Charged Point Electric Vehicle dual point chargers in Byrdstown and Jamestown, Tennessee.

VEC began coordinating with TVPPA to install electric vehicle chargers along the I-75 and I-40 corridors in 2019. Tennessee Tech met with VEC and others to discuss the installation of chargers in Jamestown and Byrdstown in October. TN Tech received a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to pay for a testbed project. This grant included the cost of the chargers. Seven States coordinated the EV charging station effort on the Cumberland Plateau.

VEC selected two sites for Charge Point Chargers. In January 2021, VEC, TN Tech and Seven States installed a charger in Byrdstown at the library. Jamestown’s charging station was installed in February at their library.

VEC is committed to providing our consumer-members with the resources they need for a changing world.

Saving Money with a Megapack
Volunteer Energy Cooperative has installed four Tesla Megapack battery energy storage systems (BESS). Each Megapack stores one megawatt of energy. Our Megapacks provide voltage support, capacity, and frequency regulation that assist grid stability.

VEC will use the Megapack to reduce energy demand charges from the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and improve demand response when energy demand costs are higher. Shaving the peak reduces the cost to be charged during low usage hours (lower rate) and discharged to be charged during high usage hours (higher rate). Our Megapacks provide voltage support, capacity, and frequency regulation that assist grid stability.

April 12 is Lineworker Appreciation Day

If you were asked to associate an image or a person with Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC), I bet you would picture a lineworker. One of the most visible co-op employees, lineworkers, work tirelessly to ensure our community receives uninterrupted power 24/7. “Lineworker” is listed as one of the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S. This is understandable as they perform detailed tasks near high-voltage power lines. Regardless of the time of day, having to brave stormy weather and other challenging conditions, lineworkers must climb 40 feet in the air, often carrying heavy equipment to get the job done.

Being a lineworker is not a glamorous or easy profession. It takes years of specialized training, ongoing education, dedication, and, equally important, a sense of service and commitment. How else can you explain the willingness to leave the comfort of your home to tackle a challenging job in difficult conditions? This dedication and sense of service to the community is what sets them apart. That’s why we set aside the second Monday in April to celebrate and recognize the men and women who work around the clock to keep the lights on.

While lineworkers may be the most visible employees at VEC, it is important to note that a team of highly skilled professionals is working behind the scenes. Engineers provide ongoing expertise and guidance on the operations side of the co-op. Member service representatives are always standing by to take your calls and questions. Our information technology (IT) experts are continuously monitoring our system to help safeguard sensitive data. And these are just a few of the folks who work together to ensure we can deliver the service and reliability you expect and deserve. Without them, our lineworkers wouldn’t be able to “bring the light” to our community.

Our dedicated lineworkers are proud to represent VEC, and they deserve all the appreciation and accolades that come their way on Lineworker Appreciation Day.

On April 12, and any time you see a lineworker, I hope you’ll join me in thanking them for their exceptional service. I also hope you’ll remember that you have a dedicated team of professionals working behind the scenes at the co-op whose commitment to service runs just as deep.
Prepare Now For Spring Storms

Spring officially begins Saturday, March 20. Along with warmer weather and longer days, spring often brings strong storms to Tennessee. Here are some tips from the American Red Cross to help your family be better prepared for spring weather.

Make a Plan
Develop a plan to help your family respond to disasters. Discuss how to prepare and respond to emergencies that are most likely to happen where you live, learn, work and play. Identify responsibilities for each member of your household and plan to work together as a team. Know where you and your family will shelter during severe weather. Identify a basement, storm shelter or an inner hallway or closet that can provide protection during storms.

Get Educated
Know the difference between storm watches and warnings. A watch means that bad weather is possible. A warning means that bad weather is occurring, and you should seek shelter. Conditions following a storm can be hazardous. Stay away from downed power lines and call Volunteer Energy Cooperative (VEC) or 911.

Have a Kit
Take time now to organize the basic supplies you will need during a disaster. Basic kits should include food, water, medicine, a flashlight, battery-powered radio and extra batteries, first-aid kit, cellphone and charger. A full list of items to include in your kit can be found at redcross.org.

Prepare for Power Outages
Despite our best efforts, strong storms can create extended power outages. Battery-operated flashlights and lanterns can provide light and are safer than candles. Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. If you plan to use a generator, have an electrician properly install it to keep your family and first responders safe.