

LIGHT READING

customer newsletter



Winter is here

Be prepared for power outages



City Light is among the top utilities in the nation when it comes to providing reliable power. But during winter storms, outages happen. When an outage hits, a “line service” crew is dispatched to evaluate the problem. When possible, they isolate the damaged area and re-route power, restoring electricity quickly. Next, they get busy making repairs. After hours, crews may be called in from home to help with the restoration effort. Typically, 80 percent of the outages will be restored within 60-90 minutes.

There's plenty you can do to stay comfortable and safe during an outage:

- If your power goes out, first check for fuse or circuit breaker causes. If you determine it is a power outage, call our Outage Hotline, **(206) 684-7400**. If it is not already mentioned on our recorded message, report your outage on the automated line.
- If you are on life-sustaining equipment, have emergency power backup in good working order. Call **9-1-1** for assistance with life-threatening problems.
- Keep an emergency kit including flashlight, fresh batteries, wind-up clock, portable radio, mylar blanket, and manual can-opener. Never use candles or anything with an open flame.
- Know how to manually override electrical garage doors, gates, etc.
- Have a corded or cellular phone available. Cordless phones will not work during a power outage.
- To retain heat, dress in layers, close doors, windows, curtains and unused fireplace dampers.
- Never use outdoor gas or charcoal grills indoors or in an unventilated space.
- Evaluate the potential risks of an outage to your sensitive electronic equipment. Take steps to protect them. Remove disks and turn the computer off when not in use.
- If you plan to use a generator, learn how to operate it safely. Use it outdoors in a well-ventilated area. Never plug a generator into your home circuitry.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. Discard at-risk refrigerated foods that are warmer than 45 degrees.

Utility pole safety

Vegetation, signs and other items secured to utility poles pose safety hazards to workers and citizens. Please help out. Do not grow plants on utility poles or attach items such as hanging planters. Follow the rules if you post signs to poles. For details about the rules visit www.seattle.gov/transportation/posteringrules.htm.

Climbing hazards: Our lineworkers need a clear area to work on poles. Obstructions cause climbing belts to slip and keep spurs from gaining a secure hold, resulting in falls and injuries.

Electrical hazards: Live vegetation can conduct electricity. Anyone touching vegetation that is in contact with high-voltage current can suffer serious injury or death.

System reliability: Live vegetation contacting electrical equipment can cause short circuits and faults resulting in power outages that inconvenience our customers and add to the cost of providing electricity.

Damage to equipment: Plants growing on wooden poles encourage rot, weakening the pole and shortening its useful life.



Earth-friendly facts and incentives



“Together, we can make Seattle the most climate-friendly city in the country.”

- Mayor Greg Nickels

- The energy saved in 2005 through City Light’s conservation programs was enough electricity to power 109,000 homes for one year.
- The resulting reduction of greenhouse-gas emissions during 2005 is equal to removing 83,910 vehicles from the region’s roads.
- Collectively, City Light customers participating in conservation programs reduced their electric bills by \$63 million last year.

Call the Conservation Help Line, **(206) 684-3800** or visit www.seattle.gov/light/conserve for information on conserving energy.

City Light offers these incentives:

- Lighting rebates for small-business owners.
- Window, insulation and common-area lighting rebates for multifamily building owners. (5+ units only)
- Incentives for a variety of efficiency measures in *new multifamily construction*.

Conservation tips:

- LED decorative light sets use one-tenth the energy of mini lights. Plus, they last longer, produce less heat, and come in a variety of colors and styles. Look for them at your usual retail outlets.
- Energy Star fluorescent bulbs are great energy savers. They use about one-third of the electricity as incandescent bulbs and last 6 to 10 times longer. Because fluorescent bulbs contain a tiny amount of mercury, they should not be thrown in the trash. For a list of recycling facilities, visit www.takeitbacknetwork.org or call **(206) 684-3800**.

Bill payment: nuts & bolts

Seattle City Light is a municipal utility. According to Washington law, we may not waive charges for electricity that has been delivered to your property. This would be considered a gift of public funds.

When electric service has been disconnected for failure to pay bills, City Light is required to collect *full payment* before restoring service. An alternative is 50 percent payment *and* satisfactory payment arrangements for the entire amount due.

When changes occur in occupancy and/or property ownership, owners and tenants are equally responsible for notifying City Light *within ten working days*. If timely notification is not made, the owner may be billed for charges incurred by tenants, even if the bill is in the name of the tenant.

All adults residing at a property are responsible for paying the electric bill. This includes spouse, domestic partner, and roommates, even if not listed on the application.



Call us right away if you find billing irregularities or you are unable to pay the full amount of your bill by the due date. For more details about payment responsibility and for help with making payments, call **(206) 684-3000** or visit www.seattle.gov/light/accounts/. *Bill assistance and discount rates are available for qualifying customers who meet the income guidelines.*

Seattle City Light is a publicly owned utility dedicated to exceeding our customers' expectations in producing and delivering low-cost, reliable power in an environmentally responsible and safe way. We are committed to delivering the best customer service experience of any utility in the nation.

City Light rates

The Seattle City Council authorizes new electric rates in November. New rates will likely take effect in *January 2007*. For more information visit our rate review Web site, www.seattle.gov/light/news/issues/rateproc/. Contact Councilmember Jean Godden’s office at **(206) 684-8807**, if you have questions or comments about rates.

Integrated Resource Plan

This is a 20-year plan outlining how City Light will meet its power obligations. For information about public meetings or details of the proposed plan, please visit www.seattle.gov/light/news/issues/irp/. Public comment on the plan is welcome at scheduled public meetings; by email at SCL.IRP@seattle.gov; or by letter to: **David Clement**
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Call (206) 684-3000.
www.seattle.gov/light



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