



City of Seattle
Office of the Mayor

News

For Immediate Release
November 2, 2011

Contact: Scott Thomsen, Seattle City Light
Tel: (206) 615-0978

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS: <http://www.seattle.gov/media>

Mayor McGinn outlines how Seattle City Light is preparing for La Nina, details lessons learned from past storms and offers tips to help residents prepare for strong winds

SEATTLE - With weather experts predicting another colder, wetter, La Nina winter, Mayor Mike McGinn encouraged people today to prepare for weather-related emergencies, outlined how residents can help the City respond to power outages and updated the public on how Seattle City Light is preparing for winter storms.

"Winter storms are part of living in the Pacific Northwest. We're in this together – Seattle City Light and Seattle residents. It is essential that the City and Seattle residents are ready when storms come so we can limit how much they disrupt our lives and our economy," McGinn said. "Our power utility is committed to responding to the public when outages occur. But we need your help. I encourage Seattle residents to think ahead and prepare for any possible power outages."

There are several ways that residents can help their families and Seattle City Light respond to any power outages during the windy season:

- Residents should always have a three-day supply of water and food that does not need to be cooked;
- Have extra blankets on hand and close the doors to rooms you aren't using to help keep warm;
- Don't bring your barbecue or any fossil fuel burning stove inside your house to cook when the power goes out – this could cause carbon monoxide poisoning;
- A hand-crank radio and a hand-crank flashlight should be available – please don't use open flames such as candles;
- City Light is partner in the regional Take Winter By Storm effort – residents are encouraged to visit www.takewinterbystorm.org for more tips on being prepared for winter;
- Call 206-684-7400 to report a power outage, to find out about reported outages and to be asked to have call-back when your power is restored. The City needs your current phone number – both home and cell – in order to respond to your call.

Now is the time for all of us to prepare for winter storms. Start by building an emergency preparedness kit that contains at least three days of food and water for everyone in your home, including pets. Other items to add include a flashlight, radio, space blanket and warm clothes. Complete checklists are available at www.takewinterbystorm.org. Tips for what to do when the power goes out are available at http://seattle.gov/light/neighborhoods/nh4_pout.htm.

In addition to helping customers prepare themselves for power outages, in the five years since the December 2006 windstorm that knocked out half of City Light's distribution system, the utility has reorganized its storm response procedures: installed a computerized outage management system to coordinate restoration work and customer communications; and increased tree trimming to avoid outages from branches coming into contact with power lines. **This year alone, City Light has cleared vegetation from about 450 miles of power lines.**

Recent enhancements to the outage management system that City Light installed in 2010 provide automated estimates for restoration when an outage is reported; allow automated callbacks when power is restored for customers who want them; and improve response teams' ability to gauge the impact of adding crews from other utilities to restoration work. Just this week, City Light launched a mobile version of key web pages for smartphone users, including the utility's outage map.

"We learned a lot from the December 2006 windstorm," Seattle City Light Superintendent Jorge Carrasco said. "Reviews by our own staff, peer utility experts and outside consultants produced dozens of recommendations for improving customer service. We have put all of them into action and are better prepared to respond to a significant storm."

The City of Seattle through City Light and Seattle Public Utilities is a partner in the regional Take Winter By Storm campaign to encourage preparedness throughout western Washington.

If you experience an outage, call (206) 684-7400 to report it.

Seattle City Light is the 10th largest public electric utility in the United States. It has some of the lowest cost customer rates of any urban utility, providing reliable, renewable and environmentally responsible power to nearly 1 million Seattle area residents. City Light has been greenhouse gas neutral since 2005, the first electric utility in the nation to achieve that distinction.

###



[@MayorMcGinn](https://twitter.com/MayorMcGinn)



[Mayor Mike McGinn](https://www.facebook.com/MayorMikeMcGinn)