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Xcel Energy preparing for heavy snow, offers tips for staying safe

Hundreds of employees preparing to respond to power outages

DENVER (March 10, 2021) With a potential to see 2 to 3 feet of precipitation and wet, heavy snow, Xcel Energy is preparing to increase the number of employees and contractors they can call on to quickly and safely repair any damage that may be caused by heavy snow. Spring snowstorms have the potential to cause tree limbs to break, causing damage to power lines.

Xcel Energy has called on hundreds of employees and contractors to be ready for the storm which is expected to dump most of the precipitation over the weekend and is also working with neighboring utilities to coordinate outage restoration efforts across the state. The forecasted amount of snow could affect road conditions and how quickly crews can respond. They are being asked to make sure they have chains available to help them move quickly and safely through the snow.

“We’re currently monitoring this storm and preparing our crews to handle potential outages due to heavy snowfall and ice,” said Mark Newby, control center and trouble operations director in Colorado. “We have a seasoned crew well versed in quickly and safely restoring power in the most extreme conditions and this storm is no different. We are ready to respond.”

Xcel Energy’s electric and natural gas systems are expected to perform as usual. It performed very well during the February cold snap that impacted the Midwest last month. However, we always encourage customers to monitor their heat and electricity use and any conservation efforts will help lower their energy bills.

Here are ways customers can conserve:

- If your home uses heat, adjust your thermostat to 68 degrees or lower.
- Open drapes and blinds to maximize heat from direct sunlight.
- Run ceiling fans in a clockwise direction to push warm air down from the ceiling, adding comfort and savings.
- Keep interior doors open to help circulate air more freely and maintain constant heating levels.
- Operate energy-intensive appliances, such as electric space heaters, water heaters, dishwashers, washing machines and dryers, during early morning and late evening hours.
- Limit the opening and reopening of refrigerators, which are major users of electricity in most homes.
- When possible, businesses should shift power-intensive work processes to morning or after 8pm.
 - We have more tips for saving money and energy at our [website](#). We also offer incentives and rebates that you can use to make your homes and businesses more efficient.

Information on these programs can be found at www.xcelenergy.com by selecting the “Programs & Rebates” link at the top of the homepage.

Report your outage

Customers can help Xcel Energy get a jump on power restoration by reporting outages. Customers have several ways to report their outage.

- Xcel Energy mobile app available on iOS and Android
- Online at xcelenergy.com/out
- Text ‘OUT’ to 98936 to report an outage, or text STAT to the same number to check the status of a power outage.
- Call **1-800-895-1999** and follow the prompts—the automated phone reporting system lets customers report outages in less than 60 seconds. Once the cause of the problem is identified, the system or an Xcel Energy representative will provide customers with an estimated restoration time.

Stay informed

If outages occur, it’s important for customers to have access to the most recent updates about their power restoration. Customers can stay informed by visiting the [Xcel Energy website](#) or by [downloading the mobile app available on iOS and Android](#). Additionally, the website hosts an [outage map](#) that displays information on the number of customers out and anticipated time for restoration. Customers can also stay informed by following Xcel Energy on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Other ways customers can prepare, stay safe

- **Keep ice and now off your natural gas meter and external appliance vents** to avoid the dangerous buildup of natural gas. Gently remove any accumulated snow or ice by hand and make sure to maintain a clear path to the gas meter so it’s accessible for service or emergencies.
- **Stay away from downed power lines.** Always assume an electric line, even one that is on or near the ground, is energized and therefore dangerous. Never, under any circumstance, touch or move a downed power line. If you come across a downed power line, leave the area and report it immediately by calling **1-800-895-1999**.
- **Build a home emergency kit.** Xcel Energy recommends assembling an easily accessible kit that can be used in the event of a power outage. Useful items may include:
 - Xcel Energy phone numbers - 1-800-895-1999 for residential or 1-800-481-4700 for business
 - Battery-powered radio or television
 - Flashlights
 - Batteries
 - Back up phone chargers
 - A phone that does not require electricity
 - Non-electric alarm clock
 - Bottled water and nonperishable food
 - Manual can opener
 - First aid kit
 - Extension cords (for partial outages)

- Manufacturer's instructions on how to manually open power-operated doors (e.g., garage doors)
- **Heating safety.** If using a space heater, take care to ensure safety as more than 65,000 home fires are attributed to heating equipment each year in the United States, according to the Electrical Safety Foundation International. When using a space heater, make sure the heater has the label showing it is listed by a recognized testing laboratory, and read the manufacturer's instructions and warning labels. Additionally, inspect heaters for cracked or broken plugs and connections; don't use it if they are frayed, worn or damaged. Never leave a space heater unattended. Turn it off when leaving a room and don't go to sleep with a space heater on. Additionally, Xcel Energy offers rebates and incentives to install energy efficient furnaces and insulation.
- **Observe food safety.** According to the United States Department of Agriculture, food safety is directly related to the temperature of the food. To maintain refrigerator and freezer temperatures, keep doors closed as much as possible. A full freezer will stay at freezing temperatures for approximately two days and a half-full freezer approximately one day.

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About Xcel Energy

Xcel Energy (NASDAQ: XEL) provides the energy that powers millions of homes and businesses across eight Western and Midwestern states. Headquartered in Minneapolis, the company is an industry leader in responsibly reducing carbon emissions and producing and delivering clean energy solutions from a variety of renewable sources at competitive prices. For more information, visit xcelenergy.com or follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).