



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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NIPSCO READY FOR STORM SEASON

Utility Provides Customers with Storm Safety Tips

MERRILLVILLE, Ind. – Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) today announced it is ready for storm season and is committed to restoring power to customers quickly and safely.

At the same time, the company encourages customers to take time now to ready themselves for storm season by assembling a storm season kit and logging onto www.nipSCO.com to download tips on how to stay safe before, during and after storms.

“The key to our storm preparedness plan is our first responders, from the field crew supervisors, line workers and other personnel, all of whom are focused on keeping the lights on,” said NIPSCO President Mark Maassel. “We also want our customers to prepare for these storms and be safe.”

Preventative Maintenance

Preventative maintenance of vegetation near the company’s power lines has been ongoing and continues to be a priority for the company. Tree-trimming is the single largest expenditure in the operation and maintenance of NIPSCO’s electric distribution system.

“Tall growing trees near overhead electric lines are the leading cause of electric outages in our service area,” said Maassel. “Our forestry crews work hard to reduce the impact that trees could have on electric service not only during storm season, but also throughout the year.”

NIPSCO has been recognized as a “Tree Line USA Utility” for twelve consecutive years by the National Arbor Day Foundation for its commitment to practices that protect and enhance urban forests through tree planting, public education and employee training. Only one other utility in the nation has received a “Tree Line USA Utility” award twelve consecutive years.

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Restoration Priorities

NIPSCO's Customer Contact Center stands ready to field calls in the event of a major outage and to provide estimated restoration times. Customers calling into NIPSCO's contact center to report an outage play an integral part in helping NIPSCO restore power quickly.

During major outages, NIPSCO's goal is to restore power to critical facilities such as hospitals, lift stations, nursing homes, as well as police and fire stations. NIPSCO crews will then focus on restoring power to areas where the greatest number of residential customers can be brought online as quickly and safely as possible.

Storm Safety Information

One of the most important safety tips NIPSCO recommends is for customers to monitor the weather and know what type of weather is forecast for the area. Following are general snapshots of what NIPSCO does – and customers should do – before, during and after storms.

Before the Storm

NIPSCO's Central Operations monitors the weather 24/7 using state-of-the-art technology. When a major storm is forecast, NIPSCO crews are put on alert and prepared to respond. Customer safety tips include:

- Compile a storm preparedness kit, which should include essential medicines, non-perishable food items and water, flashlights, portable radios, and a manual can opener. Know the location of your emergency supply kit.
- Review your evacuation plan. Have the phone numbers of evacuation destinations with you as well as a road map. You may need to take alternate routes if major roads are closed or clogged.
- Check to see if shrubs or trees need trimming or if you have any weak limbs. Be particularly careful when working near power lines. Also, remove items near the home that could possibly become airborne (toys, trash cans, etc.).

NIPSCO monitors the storm and its electric infrastructure. Crews and equipment are mobilized to restore power. Personnel at NIPSCO's call center are answering phones to collect outage reports. Customers should:

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- Listen to local radio or TV stations for up-to-date storm information, including knowing what a tornado WATCH and WARNING means.
- Pick a place where family members could gather if a tornado is headed your way. It could be your basement or, if there is no basement, a center hallway, bathroom, or closet on the lowest floor. Keep away from windows.
- Fill your gas tank before a storm arrives, as gas pumps do not work if electricity is out. Automatic teller machines will also be shut off if the power goes, so get some cash to have on hand.

Following the Storm:

NIPSCO crews can usually restore outages while a storm is still in progress and will work through the night to restore power. During severe storms, it may take several hours after the storm subsides before damage reports can be analyzed and restoration efforts are prioritized. At this point, customers should:

- Immediately report a power outage or any power line hazards by calling NIPSCO at 1-800-4-NIPSCO (1-800-464-7726). Do not touch downed or hanging power lines or anything touching them.
- Monitor the status of power restoration activities on local radio stations.
- Avoid opening the refrigerator or freezer. Food will stay frozen in a fully loaded freezer for 36 to 48 hours if the doors remain closed. If the freezer is half full, the food will generally keep 24 hours.
- Keep candles away from furniture, draperies and other flammable materials. Also, keep children and pets away from open flames.
- Disconnect or turn off appliances that were on when the power outage occurred. Leave a light on so you will know when power is restored.
- If you leave your home while the power is out, double-check that all heat producing appliances, such as stoves, irons and curling irons are unplugged.
- If there is severe damage and it appears that the outage will last an extended period of time, consider moving to an alternate location.

Editor's Note: A Power Restoration Refresher graphic is embedded into the e-mail in which this news release was delivered.

NIPSCO, with headquarters in Merrillville, Ind., is one of the 10 energy distribution companies of NiSource Inc. (NYSE: NI). With nearly 712,000 natural gas customers and 445,000 electric customers across the northern third of Indiana, NIPSCO is the largest natural gas distribution company, and the second largest electric distribution company, in the state. NiSource distribution companies serve 3.7 million natural gas and electric customers primarily in nine states. More information about NIPSCO is available at www.nipsco.nisource.com.