




Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Currents

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The Steps to Restoring Power

When a major outage occurs, our crews restore service to the greatest number of people in the safest and most efficient manner possible until everyone has power.



1. High Voltage Transmission Lines

These lines carry large amounts of electricity. They rarely fail but must be repaired first.



2. Distribution Substations

Crews inspect substations, which can serve hundreds or thousands of people.



3. Main Distribution Lines

Main lines serve essential facilities like schools and larger communities.



4. Individual Homes and Businesses

After main line repairs are complete, we repair lines that serve individual homes and businesses.



The Ins and Outs of Outages

By: Chris Reese, President & CEO
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While our members are probably happy to never think about outages, at Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative outages are always on the mind. To ensure we give our members the best service possible, it's important for us to constantly consider how to prevent outages, how to identify their cause, and how best to respond to them.



While our preventative maintenance programs stop a lot of potential outages before they happen, we can't avert every outage. Whether caused by a falling branch, a squirrel, or a car accident, small outages happen from time to time and our crews are ready to take the necessary steps to handle them. In other cases, major storms or other unusual circumstances can impact our system, requiring more coordination between crews to restore power. Our area has been experiencing more extreme weather in the last couple of years which means more opportunities for these outages to occur.

Given our constant focus on combatting outages and the affect they have on our members, I wanted to share with you all some of the ins and outs of outages. When the power goes out, how do SREC crews know where to start working? Why is it important that you call to report your outage? What is the process of restoring power? We've got answers to these questions and more, and it all starts with a safe, efficient plan for power restoration.

During a larger outage, we receive communications from our devices that tell us a recloser opened, which may give us information like the fault current that passed through the device. This can help tell us where to look for the cause of the outage, whether it's a tree, animal, or something else. But when your lights go out, as old fashioned as it may seem, we still encourage you to call us to notify us of the outage. Outages that only affect individual or small groups of homes may not be automatically detected by our system. Calling our outage hotline at 877-504-6463 ensures that we know your power is out and helps us begin to gather details about the potential cause of the issue.

We then put out the call to our crews to investigate the affected area so we can diagnose and fix the problem. If this happens after hours or on a weekend or holiday, our on-call staff works together to handle the outage. If they are not already on the job, our crews must

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The Ins and Outs of Outages

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meet at our garage to gather equipment and perform their safety checks before heading out to restore power.

Restoration typically starts by repairing power lines and equipment that will restore power to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible. This process can vary depending on the cause of the outage. In some cases, we may need to make repairs to transmission lines that carry large amounts of electricity to our area. Following this, we



would check our substations for any issues and make repairs if necessary. Next, we would make repairs to the main distribution lines that directly serve a great number of homes and businesses. These overhead power lines are typically where we would begin with smaller outages caused by branches, animals, or vehicles. After those repairs are made, crews may work on tap lines which deliver power to transformers. Finally, individual service lines that run between the transformer and the home are repaired.



For the largest outages, such as storms that cause damage in multiple parts of our service territory, outage response becomes an all-hands-on-deck exercise. Our engineering and operations team identify the best strategy to restore power and determine where our line crews need to focus their efforts. Some of our operations employees such as our stakers and meter technicians assist with repairs by patrolling our lines to locate faults and directing traffic while repairs are being made.

Our communications team provides updates and information to members whenever possible and our member services staff helps by taking member reports and providing information to members who call in.

Sussex Rural Electric keeps a supply of extra equipment on hand so we can quickly get to work in the event of an outage. Through mutual aid, we can also coordinate with other electric co-ops to bring in additional crews and equipment if necessary. In some situations, we can supply segments of our area that are affected by an outage with power from another part of our service territory while repairs are still being made. This is known as “backfeeding.”

A proactive approach to maintenance helps minimize the chance of prolonged outages. This is why you see our tree contractor Asplundh periodically trimming trees and clearing vegetation near our rights-of-way. Trimming improves power reliability for our entire community. In addition to managing vegetation, we regularly inspect utility poles, power lines, and other critical equipment to maintain a more reliable system.

If you experience a power outage, don't assume a neighbor reported it or that SREC already has all the information. It's best to report the outage yourself, which you can do by calling our outage reporting number at 877-504-6463. Your reports help us determine the true size of the outage and potential causes which we may not have otherwise known.

Outages & After Hours

877-504-6463

 Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative
www.sussexrec.com



If you have a medical condition that requires electrical equipment, please let us know by enrolling in our Medical Alert Program. This program opts you in for advanced notice of planned outages, which are scheduled so we can perform important service work. We encourage all members who rely on electric-powered medical equipment to have a backup plan in place in case of an outage. This plan could include a generator, extra medical supplies, or having an alternate location you can go to until power is restored. You can find more information on the Medical Alert Program at www.sussexrec.com/medical-alert.

Some outages can be unpredictable, but as a member of Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative, you can feel confident knowing we are ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible whenever needed. This is all a part of our mission to provide the highest quality of service at the lowest possible cost, a service we have been providing this community for 85 years and counting.



MEDICAL ALERT PROGRAM

Do you rely on electric-powered medical equipment?

Enroll in our Medical Alert Program to receive advance notice of planned outages.

www.sussexrec.com/medalert

Watch Out for Invasive Pests

By: Steve Sokolowski, Marketing Associate
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We all know that invasive species can pose a threat to an area's animals, plant life, and crops, but did you know that they also threaten power distribution? Species that feed on or lay eggs in plant life can significantly weaken local trees, which can ultimately lead to branches or whole trees coming down on overhead power lines. Trees and vegetation already contribute to about 70% of outages on Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative's system. These new threats stand to make this problem even worse.

Two types of invasive bugs have made northern New Jersey their new home in recent years, putting a strain on the plant life in our area. These bugs are known as the emerald ash borer and the spotted lanternfly. The life cycle and diet of both species pose major problems for the health of our trees which can threaten the flow of power to SREC's members. We ask our members to remain aware of these species, to learn to recognize them and the signs a tree may be affected, and to take action when possible – whether that's by reporting a sighting of these species or squashing one of these bugs before it can do more damage.

The Emerald Ash Borer

While its original habitat was in several Asian countries, the emerald ash borer is an invasive species of beetle that has been present in North America in 2002.



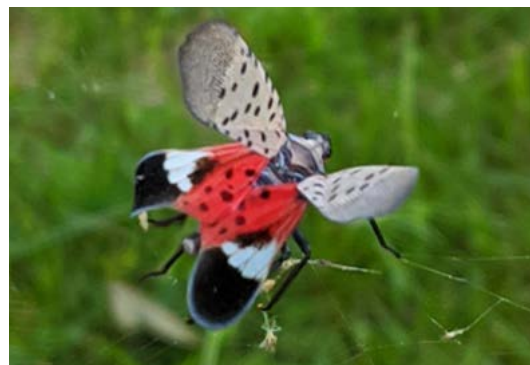
The emerald ash borer, living up to its name, specifically targets ash trees. Unfortunately, these trees are very common in Sussex County and surrounding areas. The emerald ash borer lays its eggs in the cracks of ash trees. Once the eggs hatch, emerald ash borer larvae burrow into the tree to continue their growth cycle. This process leaves distinctive, curvy patterns in the tree. Once they enter the pupal stage and grow into adult ash borers, they emerge from trees and leave exit holes.

The life cycle of the emerald ash borer is inherently parasitic, leaving these ash trees weakened and dying. You can spot when a tree has been used by emerald ash borers by the markings from the larvae's burrowing and adult ash borers' exit holes, as well as prematurely thinning and yellowing leaves. A tree that has been weakened or killed by emerald ash borers

has increased risk of falling and potentially causing a power outage.



It is very important to be able to spot an affected ash tree, not just to report an emerald ash borer sighting but also to prevent unintentionally spreading this invasive pest. Unsuspecting homeowners can accidentally transport emerald ash borer larvae and pupas to new locations when transporting firewood collected from an infested tree. For this reason, we recommend that you avoid traveling with firewood.



The Spotted Lanternfly

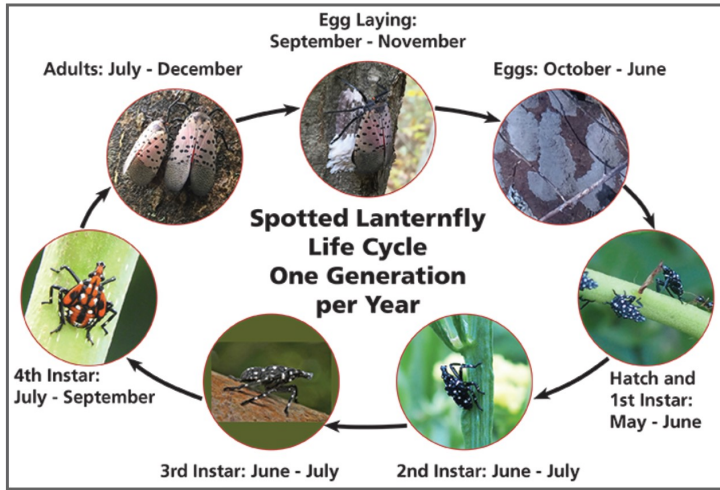
The spotted lanternfly is an invasive insect that originated in China. It was first discovered in the United States in 2014 when it was found in Pennsylvania and has since spread to several other states including New Jersey. These bugs spread so efficiently that they are known "hitchhikers." This is because they are opportunistic when laying eggs, laying them on all sorts of surfaces – which can include vehicles, trailers, and other outdoor equipment.

The spotted lanternfly feeds on over 70 different plant species. It uses its mouthparts to pierce plant life to extract sap. Its mouth can even penetrate a tree's

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Watch Out for Invasive Pests

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heavy bark to reach its sap. This process weakens trees and other plants leaving a honeydew residue which can attract other insects and promote fungal growth, which further harms the plant. In the case of large trees like those in our area, a tree that has sustained enough damage could die and become more likely to fall over, potentially hitting or taking down power lines and causing an outage.

This pest sports a distinct spotted pattern that changes throughout its

life cycle. Young lanternflies are black with white dots then develop a red coloration and wings as they reach adulthood. Spotted lanternflies reach maturity in the second half of the year and will typically lay eggs from September to December. We encourage our members to squash spotted lanternflies on sight to prevent them from reproducing and to report sightings of affected trees to the NJ Department of Agriculture.

What You Can Do

Both the emerald ash borer and spotted lanternfly are recognized as significant threats to New Jersey's ecosystems as well as utility equipment. For this reason, there are several public resources available to provide residents with information on these pests and to report sightings of infestations.



The NJ Department of Agriculture and the USDA provide online forms that can be used to report sightings of these bugs. For the benefit of our members, we have collected links to these forms as well as other resources on our website at www.sussexrec.com/pests. In addition to reporting methods, this page also includes detailed information on each pest, photos of each in various stages of their life cycle, and guides for homeowners on how to protect vegetation on their property.

When you come face-to-face with an emerald ash borer or a spotted lanternfly, there is also a simple solution that our members can take: squash that bug! While dealing with an infested tree is a more complicated concern where reporting the sighting is especially important, killing one of these pests before it can reproduce helps the effort to prevent them from running rampant on our ecosystem.

I hope you can join us in the battle to beat the bugs! Together, we can stomp out these pests, save our plant life, and make sure power keeps flowing.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

An easy way to save energy is to seal air leaks and holes where plumbing pipes run through walls in your home. You can also check wall-mounted cabinets for plumbing holes or air gaps in the back.

Fill any holes or gaps with spray foam. Wear protective gloves and use a damp rag for cleanup.

Source: Dept. of Energy



WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

LET US KNOW HOW WE'RE DOING:

TAKE OUR MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEY

WWW.SUSSEXREC.COM/SURVEYS

