



OEC prepares for rolling blackouts to ensure grid reliability

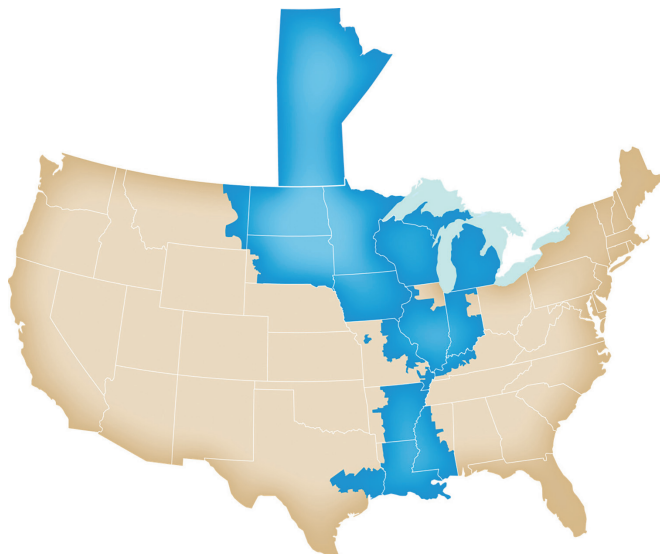


Have you heard anything in the media lately about grid resiliency? We hope this article will provide our members with some education about why this topic has been in the news, what rolling blackouts are, and why they could be necessary. More importantly, our goal is to reassure you, our members, that we are taking steps to prepare for the possibility of such an event, and that we have a plan in place of how this would be done, how we would work to make it as low-impactful as possible, and how it would be communicated to our membership.

While Oconto Electric Cooperative (OEC) is a member-owned electric cooperative that serves over 9,600 members in Oconto, Marinette, and Shawano counties, we are also part of a regional grid operated by Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO). MISO is a non-profit organization charged with ensuring the stability of the electric grid over an area of 15 U.S. states, including the Canadian province of Manitoba.

What is a rolling blackout?

A rolling blackout is a planned interruption of electric service to a group of customers for a short period of time, typically 30-60 minutes. Rolling blackouts are used to (250214) reduce the overall demand on the power grid



Due to several factors, including an increase in demand and a tightening of power supply, there is a possibility that OEC could be asked to reduce its load to ensure power grid reliability in the MISO territory.

during times of high stress, such as when there is a shortage of generation capacity.

Why might OEC need to implement a rolling blackout?

OEC may need to implement a rolling blackout if MISO asks us to reduce our load to ensure power grid reliability. This could happen if there is a shortage of generation capacity, or if there is a problem with the transmission or distribution system. Capacity shortages can be caused by (wind and solar) not being available around the clock, or other factors, such as a temporary event that could create a demand that is greater than the current capacity.

How would OEC implement a rolling blackout?

OEC would implement a rolling blackout by dividing our service territory into different zones. Each zone would be scheduled for a power outage for a specific period of time. OEC would rotate the power outages among the zones to minimize the impact on its members.

How would OEC communicate with our members?

OEC would use a variety of channels to communicate about rolling blackouts to our members, including our website, social media page, local media outlets, and phone calls. We are currently working on a plan to add text messaging capabilities as well.

What can OEC members do to prepare for a rolling blackout?

- Keep a battery-operated flashlight and radio handy
- Have a plan for charging their cell phones and other electronic devices
- Keep a supply of non-perishable food and bottled water on hand
- Have a plan for staying cool or warm during a power outage

What should OEC members do during a rolling blackout?

- Turn off all unnecessary lights and appliances
- Unplug electronics to prevent damage from power surges

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- when the power comes back on
- Stay hydrated and avoid strenuous activity
- Check on elderly neighbors and relatives

Our commitment to our members

OEC is committed to providing its members with safe and reliable electric service. As part of the regional MISO grid that includes many other electric cooperatives and utilities, any implementation of a rolling blackout would likely be coordinated with other utilities in the region to minimize the impact on our members. While the possibility of a rolling blackout is concerning, we want to assure our members that we are taking steps to prepare for such an event. We will communicate with you, our members, in advance of any rolling blackouts and will provide you with information about how to prepare and stay safe.

A QUICK GUIDE TO GENERATORS

With proper use and maintenance, generators provide great convenience during a power outage. Before you purchase a generator, determine your backup power needs to select the right size. Make a list of essential appliances and devices you'll want to power during an outage, then total the required wattage.

RECOMMENDED IF YOU...	Generator Type	Wattage	Weight	Power
... rarely lose power.	Recreational Inverter	Up to 2,000 watts	Lightweight, about 60 pounds	Quiet, easy to store Power: fridge and a few smaller items (i.e. lamp, phone charger and home security system)
... occasionally lose power. Transfer switch required.	Midsized Inverter	Up to 3,500 watts	Weights up to 150 pounds	Power: fridge, laptop, five to 10 lights, phone charger, home security system and 10K BTU air conditioner
... frequently lose power. Transfer switch required.	Portable Generators and Large Inverters	Up to 7,500 watts	Weights about 300 pounds	Power: fridge, gas furnace, 10K BTU air conditioner, dishwasher, multiple lights, TV, laptop and more Ability to connect to home's breaker panel
	Home Standby	Up to 20,000 watts	Must be permanently installed; starts automatically during outage	Power: nearly all home appliances and electronics (simultaneously) Can run indefinitely on natural gas or propane Recommended if you frequently lose power.

SAFETY FIRST!

- Let us know if you purchase a generator that you plan to connect to an electric panel.
- Improperly installed generators can create back feed, which is dangerous to our crews and the community.
Before using the generator, disconnect the normal source of power coming into your home/business.
- Never operate a generator indoors or in an enclosed space.

Disclaimer: Please note safety requirements may differ based on the type of generator you purchase. Thoroughly read the operator's manual and know how to shut off the generator quickly.

Source: Consumer Reports

Does your health rely on electricity?

Many medical devices use electricity or are battery dependent, including: breathing machines, power wheelchairs, oxygen and home dialysis equipment. Some equipment is vital to keeping you alive! Read the equipment instructions and talk to the equipment suppliers about your backup power options. Have a plan.

Cellphone

Keep your cellphone charged so that you are able to call for help.

Batteries

- If your devices are battery-operated, make sure you have extras on hand.
- Do you periodically check your backup batteries? Unused rechargeable batteries may need charging.
- Portable battery packs will supply hours of back-up energy.

Use the Car

Can your devices be plugged into or recharged through the power outlet in your vehicle? If you plan on using this for your backup power make sure that you keep your vehicle's fuel tank at least half full.

Generator

Maybe you need to invest in a generator and know how to use it safely. There are two types of generators for homeowners to choose from: portable and standby.

Medications

Do you have medications that need to stay in a cool, dry place?

- If the power goes out, a refrigerator should generally hold its temperature for two to four hours, if you are not opening and closing it.
- After four hours, empty the ice from the freezer into a cooler and keep your medication in that cooler. It should be safe in there for a day or two.

OEC deeply cares about the health and safety of our members. We encourage you to do the same and have an emergency plan in place. (874102)



Sunshine and Smiles

Appreciating our members!

With smiling faces and bellies full of flapjacks, the member appreciation pancake breakfast drew people in from near and far, some who have been coming for years and others who attended for their first time. Our last in-person member appreciation event was in 2019 before COVID-19 hit.

The event gave OEC members a chance to learn about solutions and services offered by their cooperative all while earning a chance to win door prizes. The event provided plenty of family fun, including a bounce house, face painting, coloring contest, safety demos and more.

OEC's right-of-way crew had their equipment on display and was available to answer questions regarding tree cutting.

We would like to express our gratitude for the continued support and trust of our valued members.





Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The holiday season is upon us, and that means we'll be using more energy in the kitchen. When possible, cook with smaller countertop appliances instead of the stovetop or oven. Smaller appliances like slow cookers, air fryers and Instant Pots consume less energy.

When using the oven or stovetop, match the size of the pot to the heating element and place a lid over the pot while cooking. The food will cook faster, and you'll use less energy.

Source: Dept.
of Energy



HIDDEN ACCOUNT NUMBERS

Oconto Electric Cooperative hides two account numbers in the local pages of the *Wisconsin Energy Cooperative News* each month. If you spot your account number, call our office before you receive the next issue, and OEC will give you a \$15 credit on your electric bill or a \$25 credit if you have a load management receiver. The October account numbers belonged to Elmer Whiting, Oconto, and Miles Berkovitz, Shawano.

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