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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Update: Statewide power generation emergency expected to extend outages for CenterPoint Energy customers**

**Houston – Feb. 16, 2021** – The Texas electric system continues to face an unprecedented power shortage due to extreme winter weather. Because the state’s current power generation has fallen short of demand, significant electricity outages have resulted across Texas and are lasting longer than previously planned. CenterPoint Energy is required to comply with ERCOT’s directive to suspend electric service to a portion of its customers. The company does not generate electricity itself, so the current shortage of power capacity from the grid is not something that CenterPoint Energy directly controls.

Due to the continued issues with power generators’ ability to produce electricity, CenterPoint Energy’s customers need to be prepared to be without power, potentially for the duration of the generation shortage event, which could last several more days.

CenterPoint Energy continues to navigate this historic weather event to provide for the stabilization of its electric delivery system and the reliability of its natural gas infrastructure. The company’s transmission and distribution systems handled the severe weather well, and CenterPoint Energy is prepared to serve its customers when generating capacity from third-party generators is available.

As an electric transmission and delivery company serving the Greater Houston area, CenterPoint Energy depends on electricity that is provided by third-party electricity generators and received through the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), which is responsible for managing and scheduling power on the electric grid in Texas.

“We are ready to restore power as soon as it is available to be delivered; however, there is not enough electricity from third-party generators,” said Dave Lesar, President and CEO, CenterPoint Energy. “CenterPoint Energy continues to communicate with the Electric Reliability Council of Texas and other stakeholders on the power shortage, but we have no control over the generators’ ability to provide power, nor are we able to predict when they will resume their generation. As soon as power is delivered to us, we will be ready to begin to deliver that power to our customers.”

CenterPoint Energy understands the significant challenges facing customers who have lost power and appreciates their patience as the company continues to follow ERCOT’s directive to implement controlled outages to help reach a balance between power supply and demand in the state.

CenterPoint Energy’s Executive Vice President, Electric Utility, Kenny Mercado added, “Given uncertain timing and the ongoing public safety risks due to the severe weather conditions in Houston and surrounding areas, CenterPoint Energy advises all of its electric customers to be prepared to be without power, potentially for the duration of the generation shortage event, which could last several more days. We encourage all our customers to take precautions for their personal safety.”

CenterPoint Energy will continue to update customers through local media outlets, its website ([centerpointenergy.com](http://centerpointenergy.com)) and its social media channels, [Twitter](#) (@CNPAlerts) and [Facebook](#).

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CenterPoint Energy is providing this update as of Tuesday morning:

### Electric Operations

- As of 2:45 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 16 the estimated number of Houston area customers without power is 1.27 million.
- Overnight, CenterPoint Energy was able to restart the process of rotating outages. Unfortunately, this process had to be halted due to another ERCOT order to reduce electric delivery, as seven third-party electricity generators in CenterPoint Energy's region went offline.
- CenterPoint Energy crews conducted an assessment of the Houston Electric transmission system on Monday and determined that there is no damage.
- CenterPoint Energy is continuously evaluating its system and performing any needed repairs to be ready to restore service to customers as soon as additional power is available from the grid.
- If additional generating capacity goes offline, it would negatively impact the electric system, resulting in additional customer outages.
- To assist with this situation and limit outages, customers who do have power are asked to reduce their electricity use to the lowest level possible.
  - For steps on how to reduce energy use, customers can visit <http://www.ercot.com/about/conservation>.

### Electric Safety

- CenterPoint Energy takes the safety and security concerns of its customers very seriously. Unfortunately, from time to time, people attempt to impersonate utility company employees in order to gain access to someone's home.
- All CenterPoint Energy employees and contractors carry identification badges. If the badges are not visible, they will show them upon request.
- Customers should know the following:
  - All CenterPoint Energy vehicles are marked with the CenterPoint Energy logo.
  - All vehicles being used by CenterPoint Energy contractors are marked with the CenterPoint Energy logo.
  - All CenterPoint Energy employees and contractors carry identification badges. If the badges are not visible, they will show them upon request.
  - If a customer has any doubts whether someone is a CenterPoint Energy employee, they should ask to see their ID badge.
  - If there is a still doubt or any other issue, even after seeing an ID badge, customers should call local law enforcement.



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- In most cases, it is **NOT** necessary for CenterPoint Energy employees to enter a customer's home or apartment, since most work is done outside on power and natural gas lines. However, when restoring natural gas service, it **IS** necessary for CenterPoint Energy's natural gas employees to enter a home or business to relight pilots and ensure that it is safe to resume natural gas service.

### Natural Gas Operations

- CenterPoint Energy teams are in ongoing communications with upstream natural gas suppliers to coordinate and maintain reliability across the company's eight-state service territory.
- When and where required, CenterPoint Energy has deployed additional staff to respond to system and customer needs.
- During this extreme weather event, the company has delivered a record volume of natural gas to its customers.
- To prevent service interruptions, the company Mobile Energy Solutions business currently has 19 temporary gas installations deployed in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Texas, with additional equipment as needed.
- In response to high heating demand as a result of the extremely cold temperatures, CenterPoint customers in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Texas are asked to temporarily lower their thermostat settings to help conserve natural gas.

### Natural Gas Safety Tips

- **Make sure your heating system is working properly.** Malfunctioning home heating equipment can cause a fire or carbon monoxide poisoning. Check that outside furnace vents aren't blocked by snow or ice. Keep your furnace filter clean for safe, efficient operation.
- **Use space heaters safely.** Use a space heater with an automatic shut-off, and keep children, pets and all items at least three feet away. A space heater that uses gas, propane or wood should be vented to the outside. Stoves and ovens should never be used for space heating.
- **Keep generators positioned outside** and at least 15 feet away from open windows so exhaust does not enter your home/business or a neighboring home/business.
- **Check your carbon monoxide (CO) and smoke alarms.** These devices are essential to warn you of a fire or dangerous malfunction with a furnace, water heater, fireplace or stove. Test your alarms monthly and change batteries every year.
- **Immediately report a suspected gas leak.** If you smell the "rotten egg" odor of natural gas, immediately leave on foot, go to a safe location and call both 911 and [CenterPoint Energy](#). Don't use electric switches, phones (including cell phones), drive or start a car, or do anything that could cause a spark.