

City of Columbia Utilities After Hours Service Alert Guidelines

City of Columbia Utilities' Communication staff is responsible for providing alerts to the public regarding outages for electrical and water service based on the following guidelines. Communications Staff who are responsible for after-hours utility alerts are referred to hereby as on-call staff. Each Public Information Specialist will participate in a weekly rotation for on-call status.

1) Alerts General Information

- a) Service alerts will be made on the utility's Facebook, X, and NextDoor pages.
- b) Service Alert Time Frame
 - i. Service alerts will occur by Communications staff during normal business hours (0800 to 1700 hours).
 - ii. After hour alerts will occur from 0700 to 0800 hours and from 1700 to 2100 hours. Additional alerts may occur outside of the referenced times if on-call staff are contacted by the electrical control room, water distribution, the Utility Director/designee, or are otherwise aware of notification-worthy outages.

2) Electrical Outages

- a) When an electrical outage occurs or there is a prolonged outage, on-call staff will be notified via an email from an automated system developed by City IT based on the utility's outage map.
- b) Alerts will be made about the occurrence of an outage when 1,000 or more customers are affected by an electrical outage.
- c) Alerts will be made regarding a prolonged outage, regardless of the number of affected customers. A prolonged outage is defined as an outage lasting more than 2 hours.
 - i. On-staff will contact the control room to obtain information regarding the reason for the outage to include with the notification of the prolonged outage.
- d) Alerts will be made upon contact to on-call staff by the electrical control room or utility management.

3) Water Service Alerts and Boil Advisories

- a) When a water service alert and/or boil advisory occurs, on-call staff will be notified via Rave.
- b) Alerts will be made about the occurrence of a service alert and/or boil advisory when 50 or more customers are affected.
 - i. Exception: a scheduled boil advisory affects a building complex and all tenants have been given prior notification.
- c) Alerts will be made upon contact to on-call staff by water distribution or utility management.

4) Social Media Templates

- a) Electric:
 - i. For an outage that is in a specific area:
Alert: There is a power outage affecting [number of] customers.
City of Columbia Utility crews are working to restore the power as soon as possible.
To report a power outage, please call 573.875.2555.
You can visit the outage map at experience.arcgis.com/experience/cc2a91d460b940e89ba1f408471eda53

- ii. For prolonged outages lasting two hours or more:
Alert: There is a prolonged power outage affecting [number of] customers.
The reason for said outage is because of [if explanation is available].
City of Columbia Utility crews are working to restore the power as soon as possible.
To report a power outage, please call 573.875.2555.
You can visit the outage map at
experience.arcgis.com/experience/cc2a91d460b940e89ba1f408471eda53
- ii. For widespread outages because of weather:
Alert: City of Columbia Utilities is experiencing multiple power outages. City of Columbia Utility crews are working to restore power as soon as possible.
To report a power outage, please call 573.875.2555.
You can visit the outage map at:
experience.arcgis.com/experience/cc2a91d460b940e89ba1f408471eda53
- iii. For widespread outages because of weather, outages have begun to be restored, and crews have more information:
UPDATE, [time/day]: All known outages have been repaired. The outage was caused by [if cause is available] and affected [number of] customers. Power was restored at approximately [time if available] and lasted approximately [duration if available].
We appreciate our customers' patience during the outage.
If you are still experiencing an outage, please call 573.875.2555 to report it.
- iv. An example from June 2024:
Update:
City of Columbia Utility crews dealt with seven different outages during last night's storm. Crews replaced 3 broken Utility poles, and there were two other areas where the main power lines were down.
Crews got the power restored to all customers by 3 a.m.

Original post:
There are multiple electric outages reported in central Columbia. Crews are working to get power restored as quickly as possible. If your power is out, please report it at 573.875.2555.
We appreciate your patience as we work on the ongoing issues.
- v. For an outage with a downed telephone pole or other hazard that could be deemed dangerous to civilians:
Alert: There is a power outage affecting [number of] customers.
The reason for said outage is because [put description here if available].
We advise that citizens stay clear of downed power lines, as they could still be live. If you see a downed power line, please call 573.875.2555.
City of Columbia Utility crews are working to restore the power as soon as possible.
You can visit the outage map at
experience.arcgis.com/experience/cc2a91d460b940e89ba1f408471eda53/

b) Water:

For Facebook and Nextdoor, copy and paste the Rave notification and add the hyperlink to the outage map.

X (Twitter) has a character limit, so the whole Rave notification will not fit.

COMO Alert: Water Main Break has occurred at [location] for [number of] customers. A Precautionary Boil Advisory will follow. Look for hang tag

You can visit the outage map at

experience.arcgis.com/experience/cc2a91d460b940e89ba1f408471eda53

For more on boil advisories, visit como.gov/utilities/water/boil-advisories-and-boil-orders