



Pend Oreille County Public Utility District

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Pend Oreille PUD Urges Customers to Prepare for Winter Storms, Outages and Higher Seasonal Energy Use

PEND OREILLE COUNTY, Wash. - With winter weather settling in, Public Utility District No. 1 of Pend Oreille County (PUD) is encouraging customers to take simple steps now to prepare for storms, potential outages and the higher energy use that often comes with colder temperatures.

“Winter storms can move in quickly in our county, and proper preparation this time of year is vital,” said Joe Hathaway, Public Information Officer for the PUD. “A few basic steps can help keep households safe and reduce the impacts of severe weather.”

Winter Storm Preparedness

Pend Oreille PUD encourages customers to review their household emergency plans and gather essential supplies. Recommended steps include:

- Build a winter emergency kit with flashlights, extra batteries, blankets, a radio, medications and non-perishable food and water.
- Charge smartphones ahead of predicted storms and keep a vehicle charger available.
- Bookmark the PUD’s online outage map for quick access to updates.
- Stay informed by following Pend Oreille PUD on Facebook.
- Customers with medical conditions requiring uninterrupted power should plan ahead. Consider a backup generator and arrange for friends, family or local agencies to provide temporary shelter if needed.

PUD crews work year-round to prepare for winter by inspecting equipment, performing routine maintenance, and clearing vegetation along hundreds of miles of line to help reduce outages caused by falling trees and branches.

“Our crews work hard to keep the lights on, but as all locals know, heavy snow, ice and falling trees can still cause outages,” Hathaway said. “While we strive to provide continuous electric service, no utility can guarantee that outages won’t occur during harsh winter conditions.”

Outage Preparedness and Safety

If an outage occurs, customers should:

- Report outages by calling the PUD at 509-447-3137.
- Stay at least 35 feet away from downed power lines and always assume they are energized.

- Use generators safely and follow all manufacturer instructions, especially to prevent backfeed, which can be deadly to PUD linemen.
- Never use generators, charcoal grills, or camp stoves indoors or in garages. These appliances produce carbon monoxide, which can be deadly.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed during outages to protect food.
- Make sure flashlights have working batteries. Use candles or oil lamps only with extreme caution and never leave them unattended.

The PUD also encourages customers to check on neighbors, especially older adults or those with medical needs, during extended outages.

Winter Energy Efficiency Tips

As temperatures drop, energy use also typically rises. These simple steps can help customers stay comfortable while keeping winter bills manageable:

- Use LED holiday lights, they use up to 80% less energy and stay cooler than incandescent strands.
- Layer up before adjusting your thermostat to reduce heating demand.
- Maintain heating systems by replacing or cleaning furnace filters and scheduling routine service.
- Seal drafty windows and doors with caulk or weatherstripping.
- Cook efficiently by using smaller appliances when possible and avoiding frequent oven-door openings.
- Let in sunlight on bright days and close curtains at night to reduce heat loss.
- Conserve water by insulating exposed pipes, fixing leaks promptly and disconnecting outdoor hoses.

The PUD will continue to monitor weather conditions closely throughout the winter and respond to outages as quickly and safely as possible. “We always appreciate our customers’ patience during tough weather,” Hathaway said. “Preparedness from everyone, including us here at the PUD, helps our community get through the season safely.”

For more winter safety and energy-saving resources, visit www.popud.org.

About Pend Oreille County Public Utility District

Pend Oreille PUD was established in 1936 and began operations in 1948. The PUD is governed by three locally elected Commissioners. A General Manager and staff operate the utility within policies set by the Board of Commissioners. The PUD has four operating systems: The electric system distributes electricity to the county, the production system produces power from the Box Canyon Hydroelectric Project, the water system consists of nine individual water distribution subdivisions, and the community network system provides wholesale broadband communication services. For more information visit: <http://popud.org>.