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AFTER THE STORM

Post-storm plans can play as important a role as pre-storm preparation.

The following are tips to remember while formulating your post-storm plan:

- Stay clear of downed power lines. They may still be energized and dangerous. Puddles of water contacting downed lines are just as dangerous.
- Help keep utility telephone lines clear for emergency calls by only calling to report downed power lines. However, if your neighbor's power has been restored and yours is still out, please call to report.
- If your home is without electricity, turn off individual circuit breakers or remove fuses at the electrical panel. This will protect your family, home and appliances. Leave one breaker on to operate a light to let you know when power is back on.
- Don't trim trees or remove debris located near downed power lines. If you must remove debris from in or around your home, don't pile it under or near electrical lines or equipment.
- If operating a portable generator, keep the machine in an open area. Carbon monoxide emissions can be harmful. Follow all instructions regarding safe operation. Do not connect directly to main electrical panel. If installed incorrectly, power could flow into outside lines and injure you, your neighbors or unsuspecting utility crews working in the area.
- Any damage to your home's electric system must be repaired by an electrician and inspected by a designated agency before power can be restored. Check your weatherhead (on the roof where your service drop connects to the pole) and your meter box.
- If your home is served by underground service check your meter box and conduit.
- If you suspect water is in the walls or ceiling, stay away from electrical outlets and contact an electrician to repair the damage.
- For speed and efficiency, you and your neighbors could try to get one licensed electrician to inspect all your homes.
- If you need to live in temporary quarters on your property due to damage to your home, an electrician can install a temporary service pole. After the pole is inspected by a designated agency, your electric utility can provide power.