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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Important Information About Electricity Load Shedding and What It Could Mean to You

Houston County Electric Cooperative (HCEC) operates in two electric grids, Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) and the Southwestern Power Pool (SPP). They are responsible for ensuring that the supply of electricity is sufficient to meet consumer demand across Texas.

When electric supply provided by all available power generation plants, wind farms and other sources becomes insufficient to meet consumer demand, ERCOT and SPP implement emergency operations to prevent catastrophic, uncontrolled blackouts by calling electric utilities across the state to shed load. Load shed is the last resort to protect the entire electric grid. Load shed requires us to turn off power to reduce demand on the electric grid.

Electric utilities, including HCEC, are obligated to immediately implement load shed procedures when instructed.

During consumer load shed events:

- All consumers should be aware their power could go out without advanced warning. Efforts will be made to provide advanced notification of pending outages, but circumstances do not always allow that to happen.
- Consumers designated as Critical Load, in accordance with PUC §25.497, are not guaranteed an uninterrupted supply of electricity. It is the responsibility of the retail customer to make necessary arrangements for alternative sources of electric power should a localized outage or load shed event occur.
- Residential consumers dependent on electric-powered medical equipment, such as those designated as Critical Care, in accordance with PUC §25.497, are encouraged to have a solid back-up plan in the event they lose electricity. **It is important to note that these consumers are not excluded from controlled outages and may lose power during a load shed event. Anyone who depends on electricity for life-sustaining equipment should have a back-up plan in place.**
- Electric utilities will prioritize continuity of service for certain consumers whose service is critical to the community during an emergency or those whose service provides major support to the integrity of the electric system during an emergency.
- Because a load shed event is an emergency order requiring immediate action, electric utilities, including HCEC, do not have the information to be able to notify individual consumers if they may lose power, when they may lose power or how long the load shed event may last.

- In extreme power emergencies, grid operators may require electric utilities to shed large amounts of load over long periods of time. When this happens, some consumers may be without power for an extended period of time. These outages are critical for ensuring the integrity of the state's electric grid and preventing a system-wide blackout, which could be long-lasting and have a significant impact on all aspects of life.
- Electric utilities are required to continue to comply with ERCOT and SPP controlled consumer outage instructions until each grid operator determines that outages are no longer required.
- The Public Utility Commission of Texas website ([Hot and Cold Weather, and General Energy-Saving Tips](#)) provides examples for consumers to reduce electricity use at times when involuntary load shed events may be implemented.

Regardless of the nature of the load shed event, HCEC is committed to ensuring the safety and reliability of delivering electricity to its consumers 24-hours-per-day, 7-days-per-week. HCEC may not control the issues or conditions that have required the order to shed load, but we will do everything in our power to restore electricity when we are able to safely do so. In addition, we will work to keep our consumers informed about the situation through local media outlets, social media, and direct communications. It is imperative that you update HCEC when your contact information changes to receive important alerts.

**To apply as a Critical Consumer in accordance with PUC §25.497, visit**  
[www.houstoncountyelec.com/info](http://www.houstoncountyelec.com/info)