

O&R DECLARES STORM WATCH; CREWS READY TO MAKE WEEKEND REPAIRS

PEARL RIVER, NY, May 8, 2020 11:00 a.m. --- O&R has ramped up its storm emergency response team to make repairs and restore electric service as needed over the coming Mother's Day weekend as a potentially damaging storm system blows through the region tonight through Saturday.

O&R company and contractor overhead line crews and tree removal experts have been activated for weekend duty. Site safety, customer service operations and the wide array of O&R teams that support those functions also are ready to respond. All personnel working on this emergency response will remain focused on maintaining safe, reliable service while protecting their families, customers and themselves.

The following video describes the typical storm repair and power restoration process:
https://youtu.be/JeGU8ID4_m0

Forecasters predict increasing winds and rain, possibly changing to heavy, wet snow Friday night. That precipitation is expected to end early Saturday morning. Less than 3 inches of wet snow accumulation is expected across mainly Orange and Sullivan counties.

Winds are expected to pick up again about 10 a.m. Saturday, gusting as high as 35-45 mph through most of the day. Temperatures also will be chilly Saturday, with an afternoon high between 43 and 50 degrees, averaging 20 degrees below normal for this time of year. High winds and heavy, wet snow can cause tree, utility pole and power line damage, leading to electric service interruptions.

For safety's sake, don't touch or approach any downed wire. Assume the downed wire is energized and dangerous. Do not try to move them or touch them with any object. Be mindful that downed wires can be hidden from view by tree limbs, leaves or standing water.

As an added safety precaution, O&R personnel have been instructed to practice social distancing with each other and members of the public when responding to emergency calls in an attempt to keep everyone safe from the coronavirus. O&R is following the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines during the health emergency. O&R asks members of the public as well to maintain appropriate social distancing when they encounter O&R employees working in the field, to provide for mutual safety. The following video shows a crew's social distancing in action: <https://bcove.video/3b4FvKW>

There are several ways customers can report outages and check service restoration status:

- Go to the [O&R website](#) from any computer or web-enabled mobile device;
- Use the O&R mobile app from your iPhone, iPad or Android device;
- Text "OUT" to 69678 (myORU); or
- Call Customer Assistance at 1-877-434-4100

To help its customers prepare to weather the storm, O&R offers these tips:

- For safety's sake, don't touch or approach any downed wire. Assume it is energized and dangerous. Call 911 immediately and O&R toll-free at 1-877-434-4100.

- Maintain a distance of at least 50 feet from downed wires and anything they are in contact with including puddles of water and fences. Supervise your children so that they are not in the vicinity and keep pets on a leash or otherwise secure.
- If a fallen wire is draped over a car, do not approach the car and make rescue attempts. Remain a safe distance away and try to keep the occupant of the vehicle calm. If possible, emergency personnel should handle the situation.
- Pole-top transformers --- those small grey-colored metal drums attached to the wires at the tops of most utility poles --- also should be avoided when they have been knocked to the ground.
- Portable generators pose a serious hazard if used improperly. They should be used and installed according to the manufacturer's instructions. A wrong connection could feed electricity back through the lines and endanger our repair crews. Never plug a generator into a wall unit, use it indoors or set it up outdoors near open home windows or air-handling vents.
- Have emergency equipment within reach --- portable radio, flashlights, spare batteries, first aid kit, cell phone and important medications. Keep O&R's toll-free number 1-877-434-4100 near the phone to report power outages.
- Remember: if the base station of your cordless phone plugs into the wall, your phone will be unusable during a power outage.