

FirstEnergy Utilities Prepared to Handle Summer Heat

FirstEnergy Corporation's distribution and transmission system is prepared to meet the anticipated increase in customer electricity usage associated with summer's first heat wave expected to spread across the Midwest and mid-Atlantic regions by the end of the week.

"Our comprehensive system inspections and maintenance programs help ensure system reliability when temperatures climb to 90 degrees and customers depend on us to stay comfortable," said Samuel Belcher, senior vice president of FirstEnergy and president of FirstEnergy Utilities. "From western Ohio to the New Jersey shore, our electric system is designed and maintained to operate safely and effectively even in extreme weather conditions."

The inspections include using "thermvision" cameras to capture infrared images that can detect potential problems with electrical equipment in substations and on poles. By identifying hot spots, maintenance and repairs can be conducted prior to a power outage occurring. Helicopter patrols also are used to inspect FirstEnergy transmission lines in advance of the high-demand summer season.

With the extended hot weather coinciding with the Fourth of July holiday, FirstEnergy utilities are reviewing staffing levels and hot weather operational procedures to ensure any localized power outages caused by the excessive heat are handled promptly.

Company employees also are receiving briefings about what steps they can take to stay safe on the job when the heat index rises due to the hot and humid conditions. Proper hydration, enhanced situational awareness, adjusting work schedules and paying close attention to the condition of fellow employees on the job site are some of the steps that are taken to prevent heat exhaustion or other heat-related illnesses.

FirstEnergy's utilities also offer some common-sense hot weather tips customers can follow to stay comfortable while using electricity wisely during this period of high demand:

- Set thermostats as high as comfort will allow. Every degree a customer can increase the temperature in their home will result in using about 3 percent less energy during the hottest summer days.
- During sunny weather, close drapes or blinds on windows facing the sun to prevent direct radiant heating from impacting interior temperatures.
- Use fans – moving air cools skin faster, resulting in greater comfort on hot days.
- Use a programmable thermostat to keep temperatures higher when no one is home, and to reduce the temperature before arrival back home.
- Only operate window air conditioners when someone is in the room.
- Keep refrigerators and freezers as full as possible. Frozen or cold items in the refrigerator help keep other items cool, reducing the amount of work the refrigerator has to do to maintain a lower temperature.
- Close rooms that aren't used regularly during the summer, and close the air conditioning vents in those rooms, as well.
- Avoid using heat-producing appliances during the hottest hours of the day. The less heat produced at home, the less work the air conditioner will do.
- Consider investing in ENERGY STAR® appliances or heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. FirstEnergy's utilities may offer rebates on these purchases and tax deductions may apply, as well.

- Check air conditioner and furnace fan filters. Clogged filters waste energy and money by forcing HVAC systems to work harder than necessary.

Other FirstEnergy summer safety tips are available at: www.firstenergycorp.com/safety.

FirstEnergy utilities include: Ohio Edison, The Illuminating Company and Toledo Edison in Ohio; Jersey Central Power & Light in New Jersey; Metropolitan Edison Company (Met-Ed), Pennsylvania Electric Company (Penelec), Pennsylvania Power (Penn Power), and West Penn Power in Pennsylvania; Mon Power in West Virginia; and Potomac Edison in Maryland.

In addition, if summer storms result in downed wires it is important to avoid the area and immediately call FirstEnergy. If you see a downed power line, always assume it is live and dangerous and follow these steps. Report downed power lines immediately by calling 1-888-LIGHTSS (888-544-4877). Extra caution should be exercised in areas where downed wires may be tangled in downed tree branches or other debris.

For updated company information, including hot weather tips, customers are urged to visit the 24/7 Power Center at www.firstenergycorp.com/outages

The Illuminating Company will provide updates via Twitter: @IlluminatingCo