



# **Crisis Communications Procedures**

Version 6

May 1, 2013

ERCOT PUBLIC: NOT CONFIDENTIAL

<b>Document Revisions</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>
07/31/2007	0.01	First approved draft	R. Drew/D. Roark
10/15/2007	0.02	Added sign-off page & updated staff	D. Roark
03/24/2008	0.03	Updated staff	R. Drew/D. Roark
04/07/2009	0.04	Annual update (primarily staff changes)	D. Roark
5/1/2009	2.01	Revised EECF to EEA; updates to Appendix D pending	D. Roark
7/6/2009	2.02	Appendix D edits	D. Roark/A. Hale, A. Apodaca
7/14/2009	2.03	Updated Load Shed Table	D. Roark
March, 2010	3.10	Annual review/updates; revised communications matrix to reflect optional communications at Watch for 2500 MW adjusted responsive reserves	D. Roark
9/10/10	3.20	Added notification of firm-load shed events; updated load shed table; added L Cobos contact information and other minor edits to notification/press release templates	D. Roark
2/21/11	4.01	Revised to include post-Feb. 2 modifications regarding automated notifications via ENS; Updated news release templates; Changed "Legal/Corporate Communications" to External Affairs	D. Roark
3/8/11	4.02	Added SOC and Board to all ENS notifications; inserted "redlined" matrix; edited news release templates	D. Roark
6/10/11	4.03	Revised zonal protocol references to nodal protocols; inserted final matrix; web team procedures, call center procedures, and other minor edits	D. Roark
7/12/11	4.04	Added C-5 – Grid Event Notification Lists Matrix; updated EEA templates to match PUC conservation tips; added new emergency call treatment center diagram	D. Roark
10/10/11	4.05	Revised to include NPRR379 changes to EEA; updated staff contacts; other minor edits	D. Roark
5/1/12	5.01	Added recommendations from internal audit; changed EILS to ERS (effective 6/1/12); added information about new EmergencyAlerts list and revised Grid Event Notification Lists Matrix and External Communications Matrix for Energy Emergencies; redacted contacts appendix and other personal contact information in order to change from "ERCOT Limited" to "Public"; redacted emergency call center diagram to protect confidential numbers; (Changes accepted after board review 5/15/12.)	D. Roark
6/17/12	5.02	Incorporated input from Board Communications Task Force, procedural updates and minor edits.	R. Searcy
4/25/13	6	Update with updated matrix and minor edits to team names, etc.	R. Searcy

## Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	4
2	Purpose.....	5
3	Scope.....	6
4	Policies/Principles.....	7
5	Communications Constituencies.....	8
6	Crisis Communications Team and Responsibilities .....	10
7	Crisis Communications Procedures .....	12
	7.1 Activate Crisis Communications Procedures.....	12
	7.2 Take Immediate Action.....	12
	7.3 Communicate Information about the Crisis.....	13
	7.4 Bring Closure to Crisis.....	13
	7.5 Incorporate Learning.....	13
	7.6 Energy Emergency Alert.....	14
8	Long-term Crisis Communications Procedures .....	16
9	Procedures for Crises with Lead-time.....	17
10	Procedures for Communicating with Federal Agencies .....	18
11	Definitions.....	19
12	Maintaining the Procedures .....	20
13	Training and Exercises.....	21
	Appendix A: Energy Emergency Alert.....	22
	Appendix A-1 – Energy Emergency External Communications Matrix .....	29
	Appendix A-2 – EEA Notification Templates.....	30
	Appendix A-3 – EEA Incoming Call Hotline Messages .....	40
	Appendix B: Hurricane Communications Materials.....	41
	Appendix C: Crisis Communication Contacts.....	49
	Appendix C-1 – ERCOT Employee Contacts .....	50
	Appendix C-2 – Government Contacts.....	51
	Appendix C-3 – Media Contacts.....	52
	Appendix C-4 – Market Participant Contacts.....	53
	Appendix C-5 – Grid Event Notification Lists Matrix .....	54
	Appendix D: Procedures for Using the Public Website.....	55
	Appendix E: In-Bound Calls Treatment .....	57
	Appendix F: Black Start.....	60

# **1 Introduction**

ERCOT is the organization responsible for ensuring the reliability and adequacy of the regional bulk electric power grid for the majority of Texas. The ERCOT power grid encompasses approximately 85 percent of the state's electric load and about 75 percent of the Texas land area. The ERCOT region covers most of Texas, including Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, Austin, Corpus Christi, Abilene and the Rio Grande Valley. It does not include the El Paso area, the Texas Panhandle, Northeast Texas (including Longview, Marshall, and Texarkana), and Southeast Texas (including Beaumont, Port Arthur and the Woodlands).

As the independent system operator for its region, ERCOT manages the scheduling of power on an electric grid consisting of more than 550 generation units and more than 40,800 miles of high-voltage transmission lines. ERCOT is a non-profit corporation regulated by the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) and subject to oversight by the Texas Legislature.

## **2 Purpose**

The purpose of the Crisis Communications Procedures is to ensure orderly and timely communication of information in the event of an unexpected, abnormal or critical situation that threatens the reliability of the regional electric grid; the operations of the ERCOT markets; or the safety, health or security of ERCOT's employees or property. These procedures establish the crisis communications framework for ERCOT to collect, coordinate and share emergency information and system status with the Texas Legislature, the PUC, other Texas state governmental entities, market participants and stakeholders, local government, federal government, and the media and public.

This document is not intended to address every contingency associated with crisis situations and the associated operational issues and challenges. ERCOT has a separate Business Continuity Plan, which addresses the numerous issues related to continuing its business operations during a disaster.

Due to the complexity of communications among these diverse groups, this document should be expected to change periodically.

### **3 Scope**

The Crisis Communications Procedures will be implemented for incidents affecting large segments of the bulk electric power grid; normal market operations; significant public health, safety or economic disruptions affecting ERCOT staff, property or constituencies; and any event that requires high-level management participation by government and the electric industry to effectively and swiftly accomplish a return of the bulk electric power grid to normal operation.

The Crisis Communications Procedures deal only with crisis communications between ERCOT and appropriate regulatory, governmental and public-safety contacts. Other ERCOT documents, including the Business Continuity Plan, address broader crisis management procedures and policies, emergency response, disaster recovery and business continuity. Please refer to the Emergency Response Plan for additional information.

Additionally, this document refers to a crisis that affects the entire ERCOT region. Regional and localized electric reliability issues may be handled differently, as noted in more detail in Appendix A.

Except as noted, the steps outlined in these procedures are not governed by the ERCOT Protocols, but rather are internal ERCOT procedures for communications. The procedures should be used in conjunction with the normal decision-making hierarchy of ERCOT and will not supplant that decision-making process.

## 4 Policies/Principles

- ERCOT communicates in a regular and timely manner during a crisis.
- All communications are truthful and include appropriately detailed information for each constituency.
- ERCOT keeps the PUC and the Legislature, as appropriate, informed of important developments, including system outages and potential electric shortages in keeping with PUC rules.
- All communications to the news media, including but not limited to interviews, are made through the Crisis Communications Team and designated spokespeople.
- ERCOT will generally communicate only about crises directly affecting ERCOT, the ERCOT markets, or the ERCOT regional grid.
- ERCOT may offer help to market participants experiencing crises on a case-by-case basis.
- The Crisis Communications Team will coordinate information with other teams, such as the Emergency Response Team and/or the Corporate Security Incident Response Team.
- ERCOT is not the first point-of-contact to the public for the majority of electricity-related crises. In many cases, ERCOT communicators refer information seekers to other sources, such as their electricity providers (load serving entities).

## 5 Communications Constituencies

- ERCOT Employees
  - Executives
  - All staff
- ERCOT Board of Directors
- Governor's Office
- Legislature
  - Senate Business and Commerce Committee
  - Senate Natural Resources Committee
  - House and Senate State Affairs committees
  - Lieutenant Governor
  - Speaker of the House
  - All Legislators
- Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC)
- Market Participants and stakeholders
- Texas Railroad Commission (RRC)
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
- State Division of Emergency Management (Governor's Office), including the State Operations Center (SOC). ERCOT usually will rely on the SOC notification system to reach:
  - City Emergency Management Departments
  - Mayors
  - Local Law Enforcement Agencies
  - Fire Departments
  - Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS)
  - County Commissioners and County Judges
  - State agencies other than the PUC, TCEQ and RRC
- Texas Reliability Entity (TRE) — notification re: emergency grid event procedures
- North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) — notification re: emergency grid event procedures



- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) — notification re: emergency grid event procedures
- News Media/Public

System Operations' communications with affected transmission providers and the following federal constituencies are beyond the scope of this document. Please see Section 10 for more information.

- Federal Agencies
  - Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)
  - Federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF)
  - North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), Electricity Sector Information Sharing and Analysis Center (ESISAC)
  - Other federal agencies, such as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission or the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), as appropriate

## 6 Crisis Communications Team and Responsibilities

**CEO** – Shares primary responsibility with the General Counsel and the Director of Corporate Communications for communicating with PUC Commissioners, members of the Legislature, and the Governor’s Office, as appropriate; approves overall messaging and serves as lead spokesperson for on-camera/radio interviews during emergency, unless otherwise designated.

**General Counsel** – Serves as backup to the CEO; ensures legal soundness of messages; develops and ensures accuracy and consistency of messages to be communicated by all parties; shares primary responsibility with the CEO and the Director of Corporate Communications for communicating with PUC Commissioners, members of the Legislature, and the Governor’s Office, as appropriate.

**Director of Corporate Communications** – Serves as backup to the CEO; develops and ensures accuracy and consistency of messages to be communicated by all parties; shares primary responsibility with the CEO and General Counsel for communicating with PUC Commissioners, members of the Legislature, and the Governor’s Office, as appropriate; ensures that all appropriate governmental and news media receive complete, timely and appropriate information; and oversees internal communications within the ERCOT organization.

### CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS STAFF

**Communications Manager** – Helps develop messaging; has primary responsibility for communicating with the news media and as spokesperson for on-camera/radio interviews during emergency, as designated by the CEO; coordinates and directs work of Core Web Team and other external communications staff; and backstops the Director of Corporate Communications and Government Relations Manager as needed.

**Government Relations Manager** – Helps develop messaging; has primary responsibility for communicating with appropriate staff contacts at the Legislature; and backstops the Director of Corporate Communications and Communications Manager as needed.

### CLIENT SERVICES STAFF

**Director of Client Services** – Oversees communication with market participants; staffs emergency call center during major emergencies that result in a large volume of calls. (See Appendix E: Inbound Calls Treatment.)

## OPERATIONS STAFF

**Director of Grid Operations** – With Manager of System Operations, serves as primary source of grid condition information; with the Control Room Operations Manager, oversees actions of operators who initiate external notices.

## **7 Crisis Communications Procedures**

### **7.1 Activate Crisis Communications Procedures**

- Member(s) of the Crisis Communications Team is/are notified that a crisis or potential crisis has been identified; the Crisis Communications Team notifies the ERCOT officers if not already informed.
- The Crisis Communications Team makes the decision to activate the Crisis Communications Procedures, except as otherwise specified. An Energy Emergency Alert (EEA), which is activated by Operations, is an example of such an exception. In an EEA event, Operations initiates first communications via the Emergency Notification System, which includes automated emails and phone calls to predetermined lists, based on the EEA level or grid status. The phone calls continue until a person responds to ensure notification is made outside regular working hours. Crisis Communications Team is briefed on the situation by relevant operations/technical/security staff; in the event of a grid emergency, this will be the Control Room Liaison.
- If the Crisis Communications Team cannot convene at ERCOT facilities, refer to the ERCOT Business Continuity Plan for alternative location or convene via telephone communication.

### **7.2 Take Immediate Action**

- Crisis Communications Team develops key messages based on information received from ERCOT Operations staff.
- Corporate Communications staff approves key messages for the PUC, Legislature, media, other governmental bodies, and SOC.
- Client Services representatives approve key messages for stakeholders and Market Participants.
- Crisis Communications Team identifies and notifies media spokesperson(s).
- Crisis Communications Team identifies and tailors appropriate standard news releases and media advisories for the specific crisis.
- Core Web Team deploys the emergency Web page (see *Appendix D*) at the request of Crisis Communications Team.
- Client Services activates emergency call center.

- Telecommunications staff transfers main line phone numbers to emergency phone line for call treatment (see *Appendix E*) at request of Crisis Communications Team.
- Crisis Communications Team records appropriate voice messages.

### **7.3 Communicate Information about the Crisis**

- Corporate Communications staff sends follow-up notifications to governmental agencies, employees and media as appropriate.
- Client Services staff sends notifications to market participants as appropriate.
- Communications used:  
First communication is an automated email and/or phone call initiated by the Control Room staff. The phone calls continue (up to three attempts) until a person responds.
  - Follow-up with key governmental contacts begins (personal calls by Corporate Communications staff)
  - Distribution of email messages
  - Recording of updates for public's inbound calls and media hotline
- Core Web Team and Crisis Communications Team periodically update the website with appropriate information.

### **7.4 Bring Closure to Crisis**

- An ERCOT officer declares that the crisis is over.
- The Crisis Communications Team issues an "all clear" notification as appropriate. Crisis Communications Team coordinates documentation of the crisis and response with input from all team members and others.
- Crisis Communications Team monitors the situation.

### **7.5 Incorporate Learning**

- Crisis Communications Team participates in a "Lessons Learned" discussion. The Director of Corporate Communications will schedule lessons-learned meetings on a quarterly basis if events have occurred during that timeframe.

- Crisis Communications Team makes amendments to the Crisis Communications Procedures document, if needed.
- Changes to procedures, roles, responsibilities, etc., are implemented, if needed.
- In the absence of a crisis event, regular quarterly training on the Crisis Communications Procedures for team members will coincide with releases of the Seasonal Assessment of Resource Adequacy.

## **7.6 Energy Emergency Alert**

- In the case of a shortage of electrical supply requiring deployment of the Energy Emergency Alert (EEA), as described in Section 6.5.9.4 of the ERCOT Protocols, ERCOT will communicate according to the procedures described in *Appendix A*. Primary communication to operating personnel at qualified scheduling entities and transmission operators will be made by system operators according to protocol.
- First communication of EEA situations to the Crisis Communications Team and other critical constituents is an automated email, text message and/or phone call initiated by the Control Room staff. The phone calls continue until a person responds to ensure notification is made outside regular working hours.
- The automated Emergency Notification System, which makes calls every two minutes up to three unsuccessful tries over a course of approximately 25 minutes, will include:

### **All EEA Levels:**

- ERCOT staff (Crisis Communications Team/CEO Contact List)
- PUC
- Office of Public Utility Counsel (OPUC)
- Government/Legislative representatives
- Board members
- State Operations Center (SOC)
- RRC
- TCEQ
- TRE
- NERC
- FERC
- Independent Market Monitor (IMM)

When the ENS system is activated for all EEA levels, written notifications also automatically go to the following:

- Subscribers to Emergency Alerts list
- Twitter, Facebook and mobile app subscribers

## EEA Level 2

- Statewide media
- Market Participant communications/media contacts

## Pre-EEA step – “Watch for Physical Responsive Reserves below 2,500 MW”:

- PUC infrastructure and reliability representatives
- TRE
- FERC
- Independent Market Monitor

## Local firm-load shed:

- PUC
- TRE
- FERC
- IMM
- OPUC
- Board members
- SOC
- Government/Legislative representatives

- The Crisis Communications Team has responsibility for follow-up communications following automated messages to provide additional information. The Crisis Communications Team also will follow up with other constituents, including government entities and the SOC hotline, to confirm the correct message has been sent to first responders, county officials and state agencies. See *Appendix A* for detailed EEA communication responsibilities.

## **8 Long-term Crisis Communications Procedures**

In the event of a long-term crisis (usually defined as lasting more than 72 hours) the same crisis communications procedures will be used with the following additions:

- Crisis Communications Team monitors the situation and continues to make communications to appropriate constituencies as needed throughout the duration of the crisis.
- Crisis Communications Team and Core Web Team periodically update the website with appropriate information throughout the duration of the crisis.



## 9 Procedures for Crises with Lead Time

In the event that ERCOT becomes aware of an impending situation that could lead to a crisis (as in the event of a forecasted hurricane), the same basic crisis communications principles and steps detailed in these procedures will be followed, but with advance planning carried out as possible.

- A spokesperson(s) will be identified in advance.
- Appropriate media advisories and press releases will be identified and tailored as much as possible to the specific situation and kept ready for release.
- All constituencies will be contacted with warning messages if appropriate, particularly if the integrity of the grid is threatened.
- Approved messages will be communicated to the Core Web Team and the “1 ERCOT Staff” email list in advance of the crisis.
- Crisis Communications Team will develop appropriate messaging for inbound phone lines, including public and news media.
- Emergency Web pages, documents and spotlights will be set up and prepared in advance for deployment.
- In the event of an impending crisis that may strike ERCOT facilities, Internal Communications staff, under the direction of the Director of Corporate Communications, has the primary responsibility for communicating with employees. Additional information is available in the confidential and proprietary Business Continuity Plan.

## **10 Procedures for Communicating with Federal Agencies**

Certain reporting to federal agencies is done by the Control Room operators without involvement from the Crisis Communications Team. This reporting must be done in a timely manner and falls outside the scope of these procedures in accordance with relevant laws and rules. Relevant information will be shared with the Crisis Communications Team as soon as possible after timely reporting to federal authorities.

## 11 Definitions

- **Crisis**

ERCOT defines a crisis as any unexpected, abnormal or critical situation that threatens the reliability of the regional electric grid, market operations, or the safety or security of ERCOT's employees or property.

- **Emergency**

ERCOT Protocols define an emergency condition as "that operating condition where the safety or reliability of the ERCOT System is compromised or threatened, as determined by ERCOT." All emergencies are crises, but not all crises are emergencies.

- **Energy Emergency Alert (EEA)**

A plan defined in the ERCOT Protocols and Operating Guides that provides an orderly, predetermined procedure for addressing a shortfall in electric supply by calling upon all available resources and, if necessary, shedding load during electric system emergencies.

Level 2 of the EEA states that in the event that load curtailment is needed, ERCOT will seek voluntary load curtailment from consumers by issuing an appeal through the public media. Communication steps for this contingency are included in *Appendix A*.

- **Triggering Event**

A triggering event is an event that causes ERCOT to declare a crisis.

## **12 Maintaining the Procedures**

The Crisis Communications Procedures shall be reviewed and, if needed, updated by ERCOT staff at least once per year prior to the summer peak demand season. The procedures shall be updated any time a major change is made to the way that ERCOT plans to communicate. Contact lists shall be updated as needed.

## **13 Training and Exercises**

On a quarterly basis, in conjunction with the release of ERCOT's Seasonal Assessment of Resource Adequacy, Corporate Communications will meet to review the Crisis Communications Procedures and discuss any recent updates. As needed, other Crisis Communications Team back-up team members and ERCOT support staff will be included in these training discussions.

Corporate Communications will participate each year in the System Operations annual storm drill and contact the PUC, the Texas State Operations Center, and other market participant communications and public information officers to invite them to participate in the crisis communications exercise.

Corporate Communications will participate in at least one other training exercise which may include participation in the state's annual hurricane drill or an equivalent drill or actual emergency event.

The Director of Corporate Communications will establish training requirements, beyond drills and real-time events, for the Crisis Communications Team, including support and back-up staff.

## **Appendix A: Energy Emergency Alert External Communications Procedures**

## Energy Emergency Alert External Communications Procedures

This document describes how the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) meets its communications obligations when an Energy Emergency Alert (EEA) event is possible, expected, or under way. These communications obligations are required by a combination of PUC Rule, ERCOT Protocol, and ERCOT internal procedures, as follows:

1. PUC Subst. R. 25.362(h)(3) requires that ERCOT immediately communicate with the PUC if “ERCOT becomes aware of any event or situation that could reasonably be anticipated to adversely affect the reliability of the regional electric network”;
2. ERCOT Protocols Sec. 6.5.9.3 (Communication under Emergency Conditions) and Sec. 6.5.9.4 (EEA) lay out the basic framework for emergency communications to market participants; and
3. ERCOT internal procedures relating to communications with government officials, market participants, ERCOT Staff, and the general public are described in this document and in the Crisis Communications Procedures document, to which this EEA Procedure document is attached as Appendix A.

### Introduction

The EEA is a set of emergency procedures to be implemented when there is insufficient generating capacity available to meet customer demand. The EEA authorizes ERCOT to order increases in the supply of electricity in the region or to order or request decreases in customer consumption in order to maintain the reliability of the grid. The EEA consists of a sequence of specific actions that ERCOT can undertake, or can order others to undertake, to preserve the reliability of the grid.

ERCOT, at management’s discretion, may at any time issue through the public news media an ERCOTwide appeal for voluntary energy conservation.

Level 1 of the EEA provides for ERCOT to increase the supply of electricity generation capacity by utilizing available DC tie capability. ERCOT also can initiate demand response through its Emergency Response Services pilots (30-minute ERS and weather-sensitive loads) at this time.

Level 2 of the EEA seeks to reduce demand on the electricity grid by interrupting primarily large industrial consumers who have contractually agreed to have power interrupted in an emergency — known as Load Resources — and/or Emergency Response Service (ERS), if available.

The EEA culminates with Level 3, at which time ERCOT orders local utilities to institute mandatory rotating outages of customers to reduce demand on the system. Implementation of Level 3 will create a need for local officials, law enforcement, and emergency service personnel to respond to situations caused by the rotating outages that have the potential to create public safety or health concerns, such as traffic signal outages, increased calls to the 9-1-1 emergency systems, and the potential need to assist persons with health conditions that require medical equipment powered by electricity.

## **Communication Responsibilities**

ERCOT's role as the system operator means that ERCOT has the best, most timely, and most complete information on the status of the electrical grid. As a result, ERCOT has the primary responsibility for providing initial notification of emergency conditions to governmental officials, including the PUC and State Operations Center (SOC), electricity market participants and the general public.

When emergency procedures are or may be needed, ERCOT will first communicate this information to the PUC and SOC via the automated Emergency Notification System. Additionally, when the first notice is issued by ERCOT for an event, ERCOT will also make personal contact with the SOC, and the Executive Director of the PUC or the Executive Director's designee. With each subsequent notice issued as ERCOT proceeds through the EEA, ERCOT will make personal contact with the Executive Director of the PUC, or the Executive Director's Designee. If the Executive Director cannot be reached, ERCOT will proceed down a contact list of senior agency management until personal contact is established.

ERCOT will also provide notice to legislative leaders, the ERCOT Board of Directors, and others as needed, using an appropriate form of notice.

ERCOT will use social media (including Twitter and Facebook), the website and mobile app, a subscriber-based notification list, and news releases to communicate with the public in a crisis, when possible.

Appendix A-2 provides a summary of the communications and the triggering events leading up to and associated with an EEA event. However, ERCOT's need and ability to issue all levels of EEA communications will depend on the specifics of the event, including the severity of the immediate and anticipated capacity shortfall, how far in advance ERCOT staff is able to predict the likelihood of an EEA event, and the amount of time available between the various levels of the EEA.

The first notification to the SOC will be an automated email or phone call to provide the greatest amount of time for the SOC to issue a situation report (SITREP) via email through the state's emergency communications network, thereby informing local and statewide governmental leaders, local law enforcement, and emergency services personnel of the event.

The Crisis Communications Team will follow up with additional information using the templates included as Appendix A- 3, with appropriate modifications based on actual conditions.



## **EEA Communications Content and Triggering Events**

The EEA communications are as follows:

### **A. Pre-EEA Notices**

Throughout each day, ERCOT system operators continuously assess the ability of available electric generation capacity to meet electricity consumption for current and future hours, with particular attention paid to available capacity during the projected peak demand hours of the day, which vary seasonally. If ERCOT determines at any point that there may be insufficient generation available to serve customers, it can issue a series of notices, advisories or watches to power plant owners to inform them of the situation. In many cases, this will result in power plant owners revising their plans for the day, which may include starting additional power plants so that they are available. If the situation is not resolved through these voluntary actions, and the adjusted responsive reserves fall below 3,000 megawatts (MW), then ERCOT Operations will issue an Advisory which serves as an informational notice to the generation owners that additional capacity may be needed. If reserves drop below 2,500 MW, ERCOT Operations will issue a Control Room Watch, which allows ERCOT to purchase additional reserve capacity from the market and take other actions to bring on extra capacity.

If ERCOT Operations issues a Control Room Watch for adjusted responsive reserves below 2,500 MW, and Corporate Communications staff learns there is a potential for development of an emergency situation, Corporate Communications staff will send an early advisory to key PUC staff and has discretion to also notify other governmental contacts.

Further, ERCOT Operations issues twice-daily notices to PUC staff. These notices include measures of the likelihood that ERCOT will need to issue a directive to shed firm load (EEA Level 3). The likelihood for each day is described as being low, medium or high. If ERCOT Operations issues an ENS notification advising that the likelihood of firm load shed for the day is high, Crisis Communications staff will follow up via email with key PUC staff, SOC and other governmental contacts, and issue a media appeal for conservation if one has not already been issued.

If ERCOT Operations issues a Control Room Watch due to reserves below 2,500 MW, the Control Room will initiate the automated Emergency Notification System email and phone calls to the infrastructure/reliability representatives for the PUC, TRE, FERC and the IMM. Crisis Communications staff will follow up with additional information if there is a potential for an emergency situation. For example, there may be times in winter or shoulder months when a Watch is required because of Protocol, even though reserves are expected to recover quickly. If Operations indicates that there is a potential for an emergency situation, the Crisis Communications Team will follow up the automated ENS message with additional information.

### **B. Localized Firm-load Shed Events**

If a transmission overload or other grid situation requires ERCOT Operations to request a utility to drop firm load in a local area, targeted conservation messages will be delivered in conjunction with the local utilities in the affected area(s). Staff does not wish to create a statewide issue or concern where none exists. An automated ENS notification will go out ONLY to the PUC, IMM, TRE, and OPUC.

Corporate Communications staff will endeavor to gather situational details quickly and will provide follow-up information to the ENS list, as well as government officials, market participant PIOs and media in the local area affected by the event.

#### C. EEA Level 1 Notice – Additional Electricity Procured

If reserves fall below 2,300 MW, ERCOT will implement EEA Level 1 and take actions to restore adequate reserves. This includes ordering all power plant owners to start and fully deploy additional plants if possible and arranging for emergency power from other electrical grids.

Following declaration of EEA Level 1, Crisis Communications staff will provide follow-up phone calls and emails following the automated ENS notification that emergency procedures have been implemented and that further actions will be required if reserves are not adequately restored.

Depending on conditions at the time, ERCOT may also issue a public media appeal for conservation. Appendix A-2 includes a template form of notice that will be the basis for EEA Level 1 notice unless Corporate Communications staff determines that the template is not appropriate for that particular situation.

#### D. EEA Level 2 Notice – Directing Interruptible Customers (Load Resources) and/or ERS to Curtail Load

If Level 1 is not successful in restoring reserves and reserves fall below 1,750 MW, ERCOT will declare EEA Level 2 and direct Load Resources and/or Emergency Response Service (ERS) to shut down their facilities, thereby reducing demand on the electrical grid.

Following declaration of EEA Level 2, ERCOT will provide notice that Level 2 has been implemented. ERCOT Corporate Communications staff will issue an appeal for voluntary conservation during Level 2 if one has not been issued in an earlier step. Appendix A-2 includes a template form of notice for EEA Level 2.

#### E. EEA Level 3 Notice – Ordering Mandatory Rotating Outages of Customers

Level 3 of the EEA is an order by ERCOT for the 16 largest transmission operators<sup>1</sup> to institute rotating outages of customers to reduce the demand on the electric grid. ERCOT orders outages in increments of 100 MW as required to stabilize the system in order to prevent a widespread, uncontrolled blackout from occurring. As a rule of thumb, one MW is roughly enough electricity to power 500 average homes under normal conditions in Texas, or about 200 homes during hot weather when air conditioners are running for longer periods of time.

When necessary to maintain the frequency of the electric grid at or above a certain level (59.8 Hertz), ERCOT immediately implements Level 3 procedures, even if there has not been time to declare prior steps. In these situations, industrial loads with underfrequency relays installed will trip off-line automatically.

The rotating outages are allocated among transmission operators in the following manner:

**ERCOT Load Shed Table<sup>2</sup> (to be updated June 1)**

<b>Transmission Operator</b>	<b>2011 Total Transmission Operator Load (MW) – percentage share of total load shed</b>
American Electric Power	8.61
Austin Energy	3.92
Brazos Electric Power Cooperative	4.83
CenterPoint Energy	24.36
City of Bryan	0.79
City of Denton	0.52
City of Garland	1.00
CPS Energy	7.07
Greenville Electric Utility Service	0.17
Lower Colorado River Authority	5.41
Oncor	37.50
Public Utility Board of Brownsville	0.40
Rayburn Country Electric Cooperative	1.17
South Texas Electric Coop	1.83
Texas New Mexico Power	2.42
<b>ERCOT Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>

<sup>1</sup> Transmission operators are called “local utilities” in public notices to more clearly describe their role to laypersons.

<sup>2</sup> from ERCOT Operating Guide, Section 4.5.3.4

ERCOT Corporate Communications staff will provide follow up information on the Level 3 implementation, following the automated ENS notification, and note the expected duration of the rotating outages (e.g., through the afternoon peak period).

Communications staff also will issue a news media release regarding implementation of Level 3. Appendix A-2 includes the form of notice that will be issued.

**F. Notice of the Cancellation of EEA Level 3**

After ERCOT Operations terminates its instruction to the local utilities to implement rotating outages, Corporate Communications will provide notice that Level 3 has been canceled. The notice will indicate that customers who continue to experience outages should contact their local utilities.

**G. Notice of Cancellation of EEA**

Once ERCOT completely exits the EEA, notice will be provided that emergency conditions are over and grid operations have returned to normal. (ERCOT will not issue a separate notice relating to the restoration of power to interruptible industrial loads, as they will have received direct instructions from ERCOT Operations.)

**Communications Related to Localized Reliability Issues**

In addition to the possibility of a regional generation shortfall, ERCOT also monitors the grid for the possibility of localized transmission outages or other reliability problems that could cause interruptions of service on a local level. In such cases, Corporate Communications, in consultation with the PUC, may also issue an advisory for a specific geographic area within the region if there is a reasonable probability that localized outages may be needed.

To the extent localized outages may occur without advance notice, ERCOT and the PUC will strive to provide immediate notification to local officials via the SOC. An additional advisory will be sent out when grid operations have returned to normal and power has been restored to all customers.

In a localized situation, ERCOT does not wish to create a statewide issue or concern where none exists, so ERCOT staff will work closely with local utilities in the affected area(s) to deliver a targeted conservation message.

Due to the localized nature of such an event, ENS notices are handled at operator discretion. Delays in notification could result as staff takes necessary steps to identify and notify appropriate stakeholders.

## Appendix A-1 – Energy Emergency External Communications Matrix

Emergency Levels	Operating Reserves	Grid Operators' Actions	Automated Emergency Notifications	Follow-up Communications from External Affairs	Media/Public Notifications
Normal Conditions	Reserves > 3,000 MW	Normal operations			
Control Room Advisory	Reserves < 3,000 MW	Issue "Advisory" to utilities -- informational only -- no additional authority for operators' actions.	Public Utility Commission (PUC) and NERC regional entity (TRE) notified via daily emails; operations notices at Control Room discretion.		
Control Room Watch	Reserves < 2,500 MW	Use quick-start capacity and non-spinning reserves (available within 30 minutes).	Automated Emergency Notification System phone call and email to PUC staff, the independent market monitor (IMM), TRE and FERC; operations notice at Control Room discretion.	If potential emergency situation, additional information sent to the GridEmergency email list (SOC, PUC, OPC, RRC, TCEQ, Board, Govmt/Lege, IMM, TRE, FERC, and Market Participants' media contacts/PIOs)	Consider Conservation Alert to support grid reliability
Conservation Alert	As needed to encourage conservation when tight operating reserves are a concern	Monitor need for additional generation and voluntary demand response resources.	None -- conservation messages entered and deployed manually in non-emergency situations.	Coordinate public notification with PUC staff; notify media of change in conditions.	Spotlight home page of ercot.com and mobile app; social media, app messages and/or news release
Energy Emergency Level 1 POWER WATCH - Conservation Needed (appeal optional if situation short-lived)	Reserves < 2,300 MW	Use capacity available from other grids (via asynchronous connections; 500 MW on average) and commit all available units; implement weather-sensitive and 30-minute ERS resources if needed	Above plus State Operations Center (notifies city, county officials & law enforcement), Office of Public Utility Counsel, govmt/lege staff and ERCOT Board; media contacts for utilities	If needed, notify GridEmergency list with additional information	News release, if appropriate; Emergency Alerts list,** Twitter and Facebook, mobile app alerts; spotlight on ercot.com and mobile app
Energy Emergency Level 2 POWER WARNING - Conservation Critical	Reserves < 1,750 MW	Deploy demand response resources: Load Resources under contract (1,000 MW on average) and/or Emergency Response Service* (400-500 MW on average), in either order. Begin block load transfers of load to other grids if appropriate.	Above plus major news services and media contacts for utilities	Same as above	News release, if appropriate; Emergency Alerts, Twitter and Facebook, mobile app alerts, spotlight on ercot.com and mobile app
Energy Emergency Level 3 POWER EMERGENCY - Rotating Outages	Reserves continuing to trend downward or frequency at or below 59.8 Hz	Instruct transmission operators to implement rotating outages. Areas affected are at the discretion of the utilities.	Same as above	Same as above	News release; Emergency Alerts list, Twitter and Facebook, mobile app alerts, spotlight on ercot.com and mobile app

\*Emergency Response Service includes 10-minute services, 30-minute and Weather-Sensitive Demand Response pilots

\*\* Sign up for Emergency Alerts and News Bulletins list at <http://lists.ercot.com>

Posted on [www.ercot.com](http://www.ercot.com) in News / Reports / Emergency Response section

## **Appendix A-2 – EEA Notification Templates**

Following are approved sample notices to be used for EEA notifications. Any changes should be event-specific. Messages may be skipped, combined or adjusted depending on actual events, subject to the discretion of the Crisis Communications Team.

If time permits, a “heads-up” email will be sent to the “GridEmergency” email list (SOC, PUC, RRC, TCEQ, OPC, Board, Government./Legislative contacts, Independent Market Monitor and market participant public information officers) prior to distribution of a news release about the initiation of emergency procedures.

### **Sample template for “heads-up” email:**

The news release below will be issued shortly.

If you have questions, please contact your ERCOT representative.

- Director of Corporate Communications - XXX-XXXX
- Government Relations Manager - XXX-XXXX
- Media Relations, media@ercot.com - XXX-XXXX
- CLIENT SERVICES, (512) 248-3900 (option 1 – wholesale)

**Winter Version**

The templates in the following section are written for summer months. For winter grid events, the time period for peak demand will be adjusted as advised by Grid Operations, and the conservation tips will be changed to the following:

- Keep your thermostat as low as is comfortable.
- Turn off and unplug non-essential lights and appliances.
- Avoid running large appliances such as washers, dryers and electric ovens during peak energy demand hours.
- Close shades and blinds at night to reduce the amount of heat lost through windows.
- Businesses should minimize the use of electric lighting and electricity-consuming equipment as much as possible.
- Large consumers of electricity should consider shutting down or reducing non-essential production processes.

The winter peak time period for conservation will typically be 5 – 9 a.m. but may require additional times depending on the circumstances.

All templates for summer and winter are saved on the Legal drive in the External Affairs folder under Crisis Communications Procedures.

**POWER WATCH – Conservation Needed; Chance of Rotating Outages****NEWS RELEASE: Electric Reliability Council of Texas****Power Watch – Conservation Needed  
Chance of Rotating Outages**

Consumers and businesses are encouraged to reduce their electricity use as much as possible today during peak electricity hours from 3 to 7 p.m. to avoid electricity emergencies or the need for rotating outages.

- Turn off all unnecessary lights, appliances, and electronic equipment.
- When at home, close blinds and drapes that get direct sun, set air conditioning thermostats to 78 degrees or higher, and use fans to cool the air.
- When away from home, set air conditioning thermostats to 85 degrees and turn all fans off before you leave. Block the sun by closing blinds or drapes on windows that will get direct sun.
- Do not use your dishwasher, laundry equipment, hair dryers, coffeemakers, or other home appliances during the peak hours of 3 to 7 p.m.
- Avoid opening refrigerators or freezers more than necessary.
- Use microwaves for cooking instead of an electric range or oven.
- Set your pool pump to run in the early morning or evening instead of the afternoon.

*See more conservation tips at Power to Save Texas, Public Utility Commission of Texas:  
<http://www.powertosavetexas.org/>*

**Power Watches** are issued by the regional electric grid operator, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), during periods of high demand when supplies of reserve power are low. At this stage, ERCOT has emergency measures to bring on additional generation, so rotating outages are not likely. However, if all sources of supplies are exhausted or large generation outages occur, ERCOT will order utilities to begin reducing load by cutting service through rotating outages.

**How to track electricity demand**

- View daily peak demand forecast, current load and available generation at <http://www.ercot.com/>
- Get real-time notices of energy emergency alerts by following @[ERCOT ISO on Twitter](#), liking [the Electric Reliability Council of Texas on Facebook](#), by signing up for our [Apple](#) or [Android](#) mobile app (available for download at the Apple Store or Google Play), or by signing up for the EmergencyAlerts list on <http://lists.ercot.com>.

**Consumer assistance**

Public Utility Commission Hotline – 1-888-782-8777



Office of Public Utility Counsel Consumer Assistance – 1-877-839-0363

**Call your electric utility for information about local outages**

ERCOT manages the state's high-voltage bulk electricity grid. For questions about local outages at your home or business, or questions about rotating outage procedures for your neighborhood, contact the utility company or transmission provider listed on your electric bill.

[AEP Texas](#)

[Austin Energy](#)

[Bandera Electric Cooperative](#)

[Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative](#)

[Brazos Electric Power Cooperative](#)

[Brownsville Public Utilities Board](#)

[Bryan Texas Utilities](#)

[CenterPoint Energy](#)

[College Station Utilities](#)

[CPS Energy – San Antonio](#)

[Denton Municipal Electric](#)

[Garland Power & Light](#)

[Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative](#)

[LCRA](#)

[Magic Valley Electric Cooperative](#)

[Nueces Electric Cooperative](#)

[Oncor](#)

[Pedernales Electric Cooperative](#)

[Rayburn County Electric Cooperative](#)

[Sharyland Utilities](#)

[South Texas Electric Cooperative](#)

[Texas-New Mexico Power](#)

**Conservation Tips**

<http://www.powertosavetexas.org/>

**ERCOT Region**

The ERCOT Region includes Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, Austin, Corpus Christi, Abilene and the Rio Grande Valley. It does not include the El Paso area, the Texas Panhandle, Northeast Texas (Longview, Marshall and Texarkana), and Southeast Texas (Beaumont, Port Arthur, and the Woodlands). Region map:

<http://www.ercot.com/news/mediakit/maps/index.html>

*The Electric Reliability Council of Texas, Inc., (ERCOT) manages the flow of electric power to approximately 23 million Texas customers – representing 85 percent of the state's electric load and 75 percent of the Texas land area. As the Independent System Operator for the region, ERCOT schedules power on an electric grid that connects 40,500 miles of transmission lines and more than 550 generation units. ERCOT also manages financial settlement for the competitive wholesale bulk-power market and administers customer switching for 6.7 million Texans in competitive choice areas. ERCOT is a membership-based 501(c)(4) nonprofit corporation, governed by a board of directors and subject to oversight by the Public Utility Commission of Texas and the Texas Legislature.*

**Media Contact:** [media@ercot.com](mailto:media@ercot.com)

**Power Warning – Conservation CRITICAL; HIGH Risk of Rotating Outages**

## **Power Warning – Conservation CRITICAL HIGH Risk of Rotating Outages**

Conservation is critical to avoid electricity emergencies or the need for rotating outages during the peak hours of 3 to 7 p.m. Consumers should reduce their consumption of electricity as much as possible to help prevent an emergency.

- Turn off all unnecessary lights, appliances and electronic equipment.
- When at home, close blinds and drapes that get direct sun, turn up air conditioning thermostats to 78 degrees or higher, and use fans to cool the air.
- When away from home, set air conditioning thermostats to 85 degrees and turn all fans off before you leave. Block the sun by closing blinds or drapes on windows that will get direct sun.
- Do not use your dishwasher, laundry equipment, hair dryers, coffeemakers or other home appliances during the peak hours of 3 to 7 p.m.
- Avoid opening refrigerators or freezers more than necessary.
- Use microwaves for cooking instead of an electric range or oven.
- Set your pool pump to run in the early morning or evening instead of the afternoon.

See more conservation tips at *Power to Save Texas*, Public Utility Commission of Texas:  
<http://www.powertosavetexas.org/>

**Power Warnings** are issued by the regional electric grid operator, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), when there is **a likelihood that rotating outages will be needed** to reduce load.

Rotating outages are controlled, temporary interruptions of electrical service initiated by each utility when supplies of reserve power are exhausted. Without this safety valve, generators would overload and begin shutting down to avoid damage, risking a domino effect of a region-wide outage.

Rotating outages primarily affect residential neighborhoods and small businesses and do not typically include critical-need customers such as hospitals and nursing homes.

The outages are typically limited to 10-45 minutes before being rotated to a different neighborhood. Some customers may experience longer outages if power surges cause equipment failure during the restoration process. Customers can minimize power surges by turning off

appliances, lights and other equipment, except for one task light to determine when power has been restored.

### **How to Track Electricity Demand**

- View daily peak demand forecast, current load and available generation at <http://www.ercot.com/>
- Get real-time notices of energy emergency alerts by following @[ERCOT\\_ISO on Twitter](#), liking [the Electric Reliability Council of Texas on Facebook](#), by signing up for our [Apple](#) or [Android](#) mobile app (available for download at the Apple Store or Google Play), or by signing up for the EmergencyAlerts list on <http://lists.ercot.com>.

### **Consumer Assistance**

Public Utility Commission Hotline – 1-888-782-8777

Office of Public Utility Counsel Consumer Assistance – 1-877-839-0363

### **Call Your Electric Utility for Information about Local Outages**

ERCOT manages the state's high-voltage bulk electricity grid. For questions about local outages at your home or business, or questions about rotating outage procedures for your neighborhood, contact the utility company or transmission provider listed on your electric bill.

[AEP Texas](#)

[Austin Energy](#)

[Bandera Electric Cooperative](#)

[Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative](#)

[Brazos Electric Power Cooperative](#)

[Brownsville Public Utilities Board](#)

[Bryan Texas Utilities](#)

[CenterPoint Energy](#)

[College Station Utilities](#)

[CPS Energy – San Antonio](#)

[Denton Municipal Electric](#)

[Garland Power & Light](#)

[Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative](#)

[LCRA](#)

[Magic Valley Electric Cooperative](#)

[Nueces Electric Cooperative](#)

[Oncor](#)

[Pedernales Electric Cooperative](#)

[Rayburn County Electric Cooperative](#)

[Sharyland Utilities](#)

[South Texas Electric Cooperative](#)

[Texas-New Mexico Power](#)

### **Conservation Tips**

<http://www.powertosavetexas.org/>

**ERCOT Region**

The ERCOT Region includes Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, Austin, Corpus Christi, Abilene and the Rio Grande Valley. It does not include the El Paso area, the Texas Panhandle, Northeast Texas (Longview, Marshall and Texarkana), and Southeast Texas (Beaumont, Port Arthur, and the Woodlands). Region map:

<http://www.ercot.com/news/mediakit/maps/index.html>

*The Electric Reliability Council of Texas, Inc., (ERCOT) manages the flow of electric power to approximately 23 million Texas customers – representing 85 percent of the state's electric load and 75 percent of the Texas land area. As the Independent System Operator for the region, ERCOT schedules power on an electric grid that connects 40,500 miles of transmission lines and more than 550 generation units. ERCOT also manages financial settlement for the competitive wholesale bulk-power market and administers customer switching for 6.7 million Texans in competitive choice areas. ERCOT is a membership-based 501(c)(4) nonprofit corporation, governed by a board of directors and subject to oversight by the Public Utility Commission of Texas and the Texas Legislature.*

**Media Contact:** media@ercot.com

**Power Emergency – Conservation CRITICAL; Rotating Outages in Progress**

## **Power Emergency – Conservation CRITICAL**

### **Rotating Outages Have Begun**

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) has instructed utilities to begin rotating outages to compensate for a generation shortage.

Rotating outages are controlled, temporary interruptions of electric service, typically lasting 10-45 minutes per neighborhood. The locations and durations are determined by the local utilities.

The need for rotating outages likely will last through the peak electricity hours from 3 to 7 p.m.

Consumers and businesses are urged to reduce their electricity use to the lowest level possible, including these steps:

- Turn off all unnecessary lights, appliances and electronic equipment.
- When at home, close blinds and drapes that get direct sun, set air conditioning thermostats to 78 degrees or higher, and use fans to cool the air.
- When away from home, set air conditioning thermostats to 85 degrees and turn all fans off before you leave. Block the sun by closing blinds or drapes on windows that will get direct sun.
- Do not use your dishwasher, laundry equipment, hair dryers, coffeemakers or other home appliances during the peak hours of 3 to 7 p.m.
- Avoid opening refrigerators or freezers more than necessary.
- Use microwaves for cooking instead of an electric range or oven.
- Set your pool pump to run in the early morning or evening instead of the afternoon.

*See more conservation tips at Power to Save Texas, Public Utility Commission of Texas:*  
<http://www.powertosavetexas.org/>

### **Background**

A **Power Emergency** indicates that the regional electric grid operator, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), has instructed utilities to implement rotating outages to reduce load.

Rotating outages are controlled, temporary interruptions of electrical service initiated by each utility when supplies of reserve power are exhausted. Without this safety valve, generators would

overload and begin shutting down to avoid damage, risking a domino effect of a region-wide outage.

The outages are typically limited to 10-45 minutes before being rotated to a different neighborhood. Some customers may experience longer outages if power surges cause equipment failure during the restoration process. Customers can minimize power surges by turning off appliances, lights and other equipment, except for one task light to determine when power has been restored.

### **How to Track Electricity Demand**

- View daily peak demand forecast, current load and available generation at <http://www.ercot.com/>
- Get real-time notices of energy emergency alerts by following @[ERCOT\\_ISO on Twitter](#), liking [the Electric Reliability Council of Texas on Facebook](#), by signing up for our [Apple](#) or [Android](#) mobile app (available for download at the Apple Store or Google Play), or by signing up for the EmergencyAlerts list on <http://lists.ercot.com>.

### **Consumer Assistance**

Public Utility Commission Hotline – 1-888-782-8777

Office of Public Utility Counsel Consumer Assistance – 1-877-839-0363

### **Call Your Electric Utility for Information about Local Outages**

ERCOT manages the state's high-voltage bulk electricity grid. For questions about local outages at your home or business, or questions about rotating outage procedures for your neighborhood, contact the utility company or transmission provider listed on your electric bill.

[AEP Texas](#)

[Austin Energy](#)

[Bandera Electric Cooperative](#)

[Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative](#)

[Brazos Electric Power Cooperative](#)

[Brownsville Public Utilities Board](#)

[Bryan Texas Utilities](#)

[CenterPoint Energy](#)

[College Station Utilities](#)

[CPS Energy – San Antonio](#)

[Denton Municipal Electric](#)

[Garland Power & Light](#)

[Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative](#)

[LCRA](#)

[Magic Valley Electric Cooperative](#)

[Nueces Electric Cooperative](#)

[Oncor](#)

[Pedernales Electric Cooperative](#)

[Rayburn County Electric Cooperative](#)

[Sharyland Utilities](#)

[South Texas Electric Cooperative](#)  
[Texas-New Mexico Power](#)

**Conservation Tips**

<http://www.puc.state.tx.us/agency/conserve/Conserve.aspx>

**ERCOT Region**

The ERCOT Region includes Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, Austin, Corpus Christi, Abilene and the Rio Grande Valley. It does not include the El Paso area, the Texas Panhandle, Northeast Texas (Longview, Marshall and Texarkana), and Southeast Texas (Beaumont, Port Arthur, and the Woodlands). Region map: <http://www.ercot.com/news/mediakit/maps/index.html>

*The Electric Reliability Council of Texas, Inc., (ERCOT) manages the flow of electric power to approximately 23 million Texas customers – representing 85 percent of the state's electric load and 75 percent of the Texas land area. As the Independent System Operator for the region, ERCOT schedules power on an electric grid that connects 40,500 miles of transmission lines and more than 550 generation units. ERCOT also manages financial settlement for the competitive wholesale bulk-power market and administers customer switching for 6.7 million Texans in competitive choice areas. ERCOT is a membership-based 501(c)(4) nonprofit corporation, governed by a board of directors and subject to oversight by the Public Utility Commission of Texas and the Texas Legislature.*

**Media Contact:** media@ercot.com

## **Appendix A-3 – EEA Incoming Call Hotline Messages**

### **Grid Condition Messages – To be recorded for incoming callers**

#### **EEA Level 3:**

“[Text of Level 3 Media Advisory]

If you are able to access the Internet, you can find updates at [www.ercot.com](http://www.ercot.com). You can also call this number back to get updates as they become available. Thank you for your patience during this event.

To repeat this message, please press 1.

Please note that ERCOT does not normally maintain a call center and is not equipped to answer large volumes of calls. However, if you have an ERCOT-related question that does not involve a power outage, you may leave a message — including your name, phone number, and a brief summary of your question — by waiting for the tone. We will return your call as soon as possible.”

#### **EEA Level 3 Cancelled:**

“[Text of Level 3 Cancelled]”

ERCOT has discontinued its instructions to transmission operators to involuntarily curtail customers via rotating outages. Any consumers continuing to experience outages should contact their local electricity providers. All ERCOT-directed load curtailments have been cancelled.

To repeat this message, please press 1.

Please note that ERCOT does not normally maintain a call center and is not equipped to answer large volumes of calls. However, if you have an ERCOT-related question that does not involve a power outage, you may leave a message — including your name, phone number, and a brief summary of your question — by waiting for the tone. We will return your call as soon as possible.”

#### **EEA Cancelled:**

“[Text of Level 1 Cancelled Media Advisory]

ERCOT earlier discontinued its instructions to transmission operators to involuntarily curtail customers via rotating outages. Any consumers continuing to experience outages should contact their local electricity providers. All ERCOT-directed load curtailments have been cancelled.

To repeat this message, please press 1.

Please note that ERCOT does not normally maintain a call center and is not equipped to answer large volumes of calls. However, if you have an ERCOT-related question that does not involve a power outage, you may leave a message — including your name, phone number, and a brief summary of your question — by waiting for the tone. We will return your call as soon as possible.”



## **Appendix B: Hurricane Communications Materials**

### **Crisis Communications Procedures**

## SAMPLE HURRICANE MEDIA ADVISORY



### ERCOT ACTIVATES HURRICANE \_\_\_\_\_ WEB PAGE FOR GRID UPDATES

AUSTIN, [date] – ERCOT has activated a special Hurricane \_\_\_\_ Web page [http://www.\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](http://www._____) to disseminate timely information regarding the impact of Hurricane \_\_\_\_ on the ERCOT electric grid. The page includes:

- Electric grid updates
- Frequently asked questions
- Links to information resources

We will make updates as they become available, with best estimates on the numbers of customers out of service and major transmission lines that are out of service.

#### **Consumer assistance**

Public Utility Commission Hotline – 1-888-782-8777

Office of Public Utility Counsel Consumer Assistance – 1-877-839-0363

#### **Call your electric utility for information about local outages**

ERCOT manages the state's high-voltage bulk electricity grid. For questions about local outages at your home or business, or questions about rotating outage procedures for your neighborhood, contact the utility company or transmission provider listed on your electric bill.

[AEP Texas](#)

[Austin Energy](#)

[Bandera Electric Cooperative](#)

[Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative](#)

[Brazos Electric Power Cooperative](#)

[Brownsville Public Utilities Board](#)

[Bryan Texas Utilities](#)

[CenterPoint Energy](#)

[College Station Utilities](#)

[CPS Energy – San Antonio](#)

[Denton Municipal Electric](#)

[Garland Power & Light](#)

[Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative](#)

[LCRA](#)

[Magic Valley Electric Cooperative](#)

[Nueces Electric Cooperative](#)

[Oncor](#)

[Pedernales Electric Cooperative](#)

[Rayburn County Electric Cooperative](#)

[Sharyland Utilities](#)

[South Texas Electric Cooperative](#)  
[Texas-New Mexico Power](#)

### **ERCOT Region**

The ERCOT Region includes Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, Austin, Corpus Christi, Abilene and the Rio Grande Valley. It does not include the El Paso area, the Texas Panhandle, Northeast Texas (Longview, Marshall and Texarkana), and Southeast Texas (Beaumont, Port Arthur, and the Woodlands). Region map:

<http://www.ercot.com/news/mediakit/maps/index.html>

*The Electric Reliability Council of Texas, Inc., (ERCOT) manages the flow of electric power to approximately 23 million Texas customers – representing 85 percent of the state's electric load and 75 percent of the Texas land area. As the Independent System Operator for the region, ERCOT schedules power on an electric grid that connects 40,500 miles of transmission lines and more than 550 generation units. ERCOT also manages financial settlement for the competitive wholesale bulk-power market and administers customer switching for 6.7 million Texans in competitive choice areas. ERCOT is a membership-based 501(c)(4) nonprofit corporation, governed by a board of directors and subject to oversight by the Public Utility Commission of Texas and the Texas Legislature.*

**Media Contact:** media@ercot.com

## **HURRICANE – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FOR WEBSITE)**

### **1. Who is responsible for getting my power back on?**

Your electric distribution service provider has the responsibility to repair any damage and bring power back online. If any part of the high-voltage bulk transmission system has been disabled by the storm, ERCOT will work with these entities and with the generation plants in the market to ensure that power is restored safely.

You can find links to the websites of transmission and distribution providers and retail electric providers at our Hurricane \_\_\_\_ links page.

### **2. What is ERCOT's role?**

ERCOT is the electric transmission grid operator. We ensure the reliability of the bulk transmission system, consisting of the high-voltage transmission network and the generators that feed that system. ERCOT maintains grid reliability by ensuring that generation matches load at all times, that transmission lines do not become overloaded, and that adequate reserves are available in case of unexpected events.

This can be especially challenging during an extreme weather event, when major transmission lines and generation facilities are subject to disruption from storm damage.

ERCOT does not have jurisdiction over the local, lower voltage distribution lines that are connected directly to homes and businesses.

### **3. What is ERCOT's biggest challenge in a hurricane?**

Grid operators must be prepared to respond to sudden and dramatic losses of electric load, which can occur when a transmission or substation facility is disabled by storm damage. They must also be prepared to respond to a sudden loss of a generating unit due to storm damage. In these cases, ERCOT's operators will instruct other generators to adjust their output.

In a typical day, power companies in the ERCOT region rely on load forecasts, developed by ERCOT, which project variations in load with substantial accuracy. These forecasts are based on factors that are fairly constant — such as normal weather patterns and business cycles.

A hurricane poses much greater challenges because it can produce immediate dramatic drops in load.

One important point: because of the evacuations on the Gulf Coast, the load in the affected areas is already significantly lower than normal — with many residences, businesses and industrial facilities shut down. This reduces the size of the challenge and the risk to overall ERCOT system reliability.

#### **4. Is ERCOT the grid operator for the entire Gulf Coast?**

No. The ERCOT region includes 75 percent of the Texas land area, including all of the Gulf Coast except the Beaumont/Port Arthur/Orange area, and points north. That section of East Texas is served by Entergy Gulf States, Inc., and is part of the eastern U.S. grid interconnection.

The ERCOT grid is a separate interconnection, entirely located within the state of Texas, and one of three nationally.

Storm damage and winds from Hurricane \_\_\_\_ are very capable of causing power outages in both the Entergy and ERCOT regions.

#### **5. Does ERCOT own and maintain the power lines?**

No. Transmission lines are owned and maintained by the transmission operators. In most cases, the transmission owner also owns the local distribution lines in your neighborhood.

Some transmission operators (CenterPoint, AEP Texas, Texas New Mexico Power, Oncor) are fully regulated entities that were unbundled from previously vertical utilities in the deregulated market. Customers living in these service areas receive their electricity and electric bills from separate companies known as “retail electric providers.”

Other transmission operators are electric cooperatives or municipally owned utilities. The South Texas Electric Cooperative (STEC) and its six distribution cooperative members (Karnes, Wharton County, Jackson, Victoria, San Patricio, and Nueces) serve a large section of the Gulf Coast.

#### **6. How can a large-scale blackout be prevented?**

ERCOT has emergency operation procedures that are designed to maintain system-wide reliability even if major outages occur in parts of the region. We work with transmission operators and generators, and rely on a sophisticated system of real-time communications from many hundreds of points on the electric grid.

#### **7. What if it's a blackout specific to my neighborhood?**

Many local areas are likely to lose power due to high winds and resulting damage from trees and debris. This does not necessarily mean that the transmission system has failed, but customers lose power nonetheless.

ERCOT's responsibility for electric grid operations and ensuring reliability extends only to the high-voltage transmission grid — it does not include local, lower voltage neighborhood distribution lines.

**8. Will the ERCOT markets continue to operate during the hurricane?**

Yes. ERCOT operates markets to provide balancing energy (to keep generation and load exactly balanced at all times) and to ensure adequate generating capacity reserves are available. We will continue to operate the markets unless and until we are overtaken by emergency events. We believe it is highly probable that the markets will continue to operate throughout the hurricane and its aftermath.

If the markets should have to be suspended, ERCOT will still have the authority to take steps to ensure the reliability of the system.

**9. What has happened to the grid in previous hurricanes?**

Hurricane Rita struck the eastern coast of Texas in 2005, causing significant electric outages in the region. Most of the affected areas were not in the ERCOT region. ERCOT assisted the neighboring grid operator, SPP, during the event.

Hurricane Alicia struck the Houston area in 1983. In that storm, significant electric service outages occurred in Houston and the surrounding area. Damage was less because the storm moved inland, and the winds weakened. ERCOT areas outside the storm path did not experience large power outages. It took several days to restore all service in the Houston area.

The effects of Hurricane \_\_\_\_\_ are expected to be \_\_\_\_\_. Larger outages will occur in the path of the storm, and it may take several days to restore service. Customers outside the storm path should not be affected.

**10. What if I have a health emergency?**

If you have a health emergency, please contact 911. You can get general hurricane information updates from the Texas State Operations Center by dialing 211.

## **HURRICANE SCRIPTS FOR INBOUND CALLS – TO BE RECORDED**

### **Grid Condition Message – To be recorded for incoming callers...**

“Thank you for calling the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. ERCOT is the independent electric grid operator for most of Texas, but does not own or maintain power lines.

If you are calling to request current grid conditions or any other information related to Hurricane \_\_\_\_, we encourage you to visit our special hurricane Web page at [www.ercot.com/\\_\\_\\_\\_](http://www.ercot.com/____).

If you are experiencing an emergency, please hang up and call 911.

If you are calling because of a power outage or other problem in your area, please call your electricity provider or transmission and distribution utility.

If you do not know which company serves your area, we have a recorded message with several phone numbers for companies in the areas affected by the hurricane. To listen to this message, please press ONE now.

If you are trying to reach a specific person at ERCOT, please press TWO now.

Please note that ERCOT does not maintain a call center and is not equipped to answer large volumes of calls. However, if you have an ERCOT-related question that does not involve a power outage related to the hurricane, you may leave a message — including your name, phone number, and a brief summary of your question — by pressing FOUR. We will return your call as soon as possible.”

### **TDSP Phone number message. [Tailor as appropriate depending on where the hurricane is projected to hit]**

“Following are phone numbers for the transmission and distribution service providers in the areas affected by Hurricane \_\_\_\_.

Customers in and north of the Beaumont-Port Arthur-Orange Tri-City area are served by Entergy Gulf States, which is not part of the ERCOT region. Entergy’s customer service line is \_\_\_\_\_.

Most customers in the Houston area are served by Centerpoint Energy, \_\_\_\_\_.

Customers along the Gulf Coast south of Houston, including the Corpus Christi area, are served by AEP Texas South, \_\_\_\_\_.

Customers served by the Texas-New Mexico transmission and distribution utility, in some south and east Houston suburbs, may call TNMP at \_\_\_\_\_.

Other areas along or near the coast are served by electric co-ops affiliated with the South Texas Electric Cooperative, \_\_\_\_\_.

If your provider was not listed here, or if you are still not sure who to call, a helpful resource is the Customer Protection Division of the Public Utility Commission of Texas, at 1-800-\_\_\_\_.

Another excellent resource for help during the hurricane is the State Operations Center hurricane hotline, which may be reached simply by dialing 211.

If you have an ERCOT-related question that does not involve a power outage related to the hurricane, you may leave a message — including your name, phone number, and a brief summary of your question — by waiting for the tone. We will return your call as soon as possible.”



## **Appendix C: Crisis Communication Contacts**

### **Crisis Communications Procedures**

## **Appendix C-1 – ERCOT Employee Contacts**

The Corporate Communications staff will maintain lists of contact information for ERCOT employees who are part of the Crisis Communications Team, as well as, key contacts in System Operations, Web Services, Network Services and the executive team. The original copy will be saved on the Legal drive in the folder: External Affairs/Crisis Communications Procedures.

## **Appendix C-2 – Government Contacts**

The Corporate Communications staff will maintain lists for contacting constituents about grid conditions or emergencies. The original copy will be saved on the Legal drive in the folder: External Affairs/Crisis Communications Procedures.

### **GridEmergency Distribution List**

The distribution lists for PUC and government contacts are restricted lists managed through an offsite location – <http://lists.ercot.com>. The Manager of Communications is the list manager. Members of the Crisis Communications Team have “send” privileges to the list.

### **Emergency Notification System Distribution Lists**

Government and regulatory representatives, as well as the public, may sign up for the EmergencyAlerts distribution list at <http://lists.ercot.com> to receive real-time grid emergency notifications.

Grid Operations owns and maintains the ENS system lists and scenarios, which can include multiple phone numbers and texting, in addition to emails. Corporate Communications assists Operations as needed in development and updating the distribution lists.

## **Appendix C-3 – Media Contacts**

### **News Bulletins Distribution List**

Any interested media, market participants or other stakeholders may self-subscribe to the “News\_Bulletins” list on the ERCOT website. This distribution list, which is managed by the Manager of Communications, receives all news releases and news bulletins distributed by Corporate Communications.

### **News Media Conference Calls Procedures**

In a situation of high media interest, the Crisis Communications Team may call a media conference call. The dial-in time and information is distributed to the [News\\_Media\\_Only@lists.ercot.com](mailto:News_Media_Only@lists.ercot.com). (As a “heads-up” notice, the email is also sent to the GridEmergency List, which includes the public information officers and communications contacts for the market participants, board members, PUC contacts and other government contacts.)

### **Emergency Notification System Distribution List for Media**

Media, as well as the public, may sign up for the EmergencyAlerts distribution list at <http://lists.ercot.com> to receive real-time grid emergency notifications. Delivery of these messages will follow automated ENS notifications, so there is a slight delay (approximately 10 minutes) in delivery.

## **Appendix C-4 – Market Participant Contacts**

Market participants, as well as members of the media and public, may sign up for the EmergencyAlerts distribution list at <http://lists.ercot.com> to receive real-time grid emergency notifications.

Corporate Communications also maintains a list of market participants' communications/media contacts. The list is updated each year prior to summer. This list is used on the "GridEmergency" distribution list and the ENS automated notification system on any levels where media are notified.

## Appendix C-5 – Grid Event Notification Lists Matrix

List	Description	Access	How to subscribe
Twitter	all EEA notices published automatically (triggered by ERCOT control room)	Open	Twitter link on ERCOT.com
Facebook	all EEA notices published automatically (triggered by ERCOT control room)	Open	Facebook link on ERCOT.com
Mobile app	all EEA notices published automatically (triggered by ERCOT control room)	Open	Apple app store and Google Play store
EmergencyAlerts	all EEA notices published automatically (triggered by ERCOT control room)	Open	Self-subscribe at <a href="http://lists.ercot.com">http://lists.ercot.com</a>
News_Bulletins	Corporate Communications - news releases	Open	Self-subscribe at <a href="http://lists.ercot.com">http://lists.ercot.com</a>
Grid_Emergency	Corporate Communications - emails for market participants' PIOs	Restricted	Send request to list owner, but must be confirmed as one of the intended recipients
Market Notices (various lists)	Wholesale Client Services market notices	Open	Self-subscribe at <a href="http://lists.ercot.com">http://lists.ercot.com</a>
Emergency Notification System for EEA Levels and Watch for reserves <2500 MW -- Internal	Automated emails, phone calls, text messages (triggered by ERCOT control room)	Restricted	System Operations maintains the list
Emergency Notification System for EEA Levels and Watch for reserves <2500 MW -- External	Automated emails, phone calls, text messages (triggered by ERCOT control room)	Restricted	Corporate Communications maintains the list

## **Appendix D: Procedures for Using the Public Website Crisis Communications Procedures**

## WEBSITE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES

### **In Case of Crisis:**

During a crisis event, Corporate Communications will contact the ERCOT.com Web team to perform the following:

1. Deploy the home page Emergency “spotlight” via Web Content Manager.
2. Suspend all current rotating spotlights if needed and link to the most recent news release.
3. Link spotlights to current news release and other relevant content provided by Corporate Communications.
4. Send notifications via ERCOT Energy Saver app; update Twitter and Facebook; RSS feeds are updated automatically.

In addition, Corporate Communications will contact the ERCOT.com Web team via the ERCOT HelpDesk for assistance in deployment of the WCM application, news release updates and any other assistance to resolve technical issues as needed. If resources are not available, the priority phone list in *Appendix A* will be used.

The Web team will maintain a file of pre-approved emergency home page spotlights.



## **Appendix E: In-Bound Calls Treatment Crisis Communications Procedures**

## **CALL TREATMENT FOR EMERGENCY/CRISIS SITUATION**

During a major event resulting in a high volume of incoming calls to the general ERCOT numbers, Client Services will implement and staff an emergency call center to handle incoming calls.

Corporate Communications will notify the Security Desk to forward main incoming extensions 3000 and 7000 to 4600 — an emergency phone tree. The Facilities Security Manager or Site Supervisor may initiate as needed if Corporate Communications is unavailable.

Calls that require responses and are not from media or government contacts will be sent to the emergency call center for handling.

Corporate Communications will record grid updates as available as a “Temporary Greeting” for the grid updates line: 2750.

For “Grid Message Mailbox” examples, see EEA examples in Appendix A-2 and a Hurricane example in Appendix B.

Details of this call treatment and access numbers are confidential.

## **ERCOT Emergency Call Treatment**

Call flow treatment diagram including passwords and personal contact information has been redacted from public version.

**Appendix F: Black Start  
Crisis Communications Procedures**

## **BLACK START**

In the event of a full system outage requiring use of the ERCOT Black Start Plan<sup>3</sup>, the Manager of System Operations will contact the Crisis Communications Team. The Communications staff will work with System Operations throughout the outage to determine the appropriate information to release to the media and public. Channels used for communication will depend on the extent of the outage and what systems are affected. Procedures defined in ERCOT's Business Continuity Plan likely would be implemented in case of a cascading blackout situation.

ERCOT will not publicly release the names of specific plants utilized in the Black Start Plan. The detailed Black Start Plan is a confidential document.

---

<sup>3</sup> A high-level description of the Black Start Plan is included in ERCOT Protocols, Section 6.5.9.6.