

RPQR – Distribution Sector Resilience - Survey to Non-Residential Customers

Introduction

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) is conducting a survey to better understand your company's expectations regarding the communications you receive from local distribution companies (LDCs) before, during, and after severe weather events. Please provide responses regarding communications you receive from your own LDC.

With the effects of climate change causing severe weather events, there are increased pressures on LDCs to maintain reliable and resilient services, while also being responsive to changing customer needs and expectations.

The [Minister of Energy's 2022 Letter of Direction](#) tasked the OEB with providing recommendations and proposals aimed at enhancing the resilience, responsiveness, and cost efficiency of the distribution sector. In response, the OEB released a report entitled [Improving Distribution Sector Resilience, Responsiveness and Cost Efficiency](#) (the Report). The Report outlines a workplan to enhance the distribution sector's capability to anticipate and respond to major weather events. In the [Minister of Energy's 2023 Letter of Direction](#), the OEB was asked to move ahead with the development and implementation of several recommendations in the Report.

The OEB has announced its workplan to execute the Report's recommendations in our [March 27, 2024 letter](#).

As the initial step of the workplan, we are gathering information on customers' expectations regarding communications from LDCs related to major weather events. We are seeking your inputs based on your experience with major weather events.

For the purposes of this survey, please consider the following as examples of major weather events:

- April 14, 2018: A large winter storm affected Southern Ontario
- May 4, 2018: Southern Ontario Windstorm
- September 21, 2018: Six tornadoes touched down in Eastern Ontario
- March 14, 2019: A winter storm caused significant flooding in Eastern Ontario
- May 21, 2022: Derecho affected Southern Ontario, with a major impact on Ottawa area

Through the OEB's [Consumer Panel](#), OEB staff has also invited a large group of residential and small business consumers from all parts of Ontario to complete this survey.

OEB staff has invited LDCs to complete a survey to understand distributors' current practices regarding operations planning, system hardening, restoration performance and customer communications related to major weather events. That survey was sent out on May 21 and is set to conclude on June 18. Results from these surveys will part of a report by the OEB on LDC best practices for addressing increasing major weather events.

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General Information

- A. Please select from the options below the customer group with which you identify.
- B. Please provide an email address the OEB can use to contact you.

- 1. Please select your electricity distributor.
- 2. Have you experienced a power interruption due to a severe weather event for any of the following lengths of time within the past two years? Please select all that apply.

8 hours or less
Between 8 hours to 24 hours
Between 24 hours to 48 hours
Between 48 hours to 72 hours
72 hours or longer
None of the above

[IF 'NONE OF THE ABOVE' AT Q2 SKIP Q3, OTHERWISE CONTINUE]

MULTIPLE CHOICE

- 3. How many times have you experienced a power interruption for each of the following lengths of time within the past 2 years?

8 hours or less: [INSERT TEXT BOX] times
Between 8 hours to 24 hours: [INSERT TEXT BOX] times
Between 24 hours to 48 hours: [INSERT TEXT BOX] times
Between 48 hours to 72 hours: [INSERT TEXT BOX] times
72 hours or longer: [INSERT TEXT BOX] times

Utility Company Communications

SINGLE CHOICE

- 4. In the past, do you recall receiving any communications from your electricity utility regarding power interruptions due to a severe weather event (whether through email, text, social media or distributor's website)?

Yes
No

[IF YES TO Q4 ASK Q5 AND Q6, OTHERWISE SKIP]

MULTI CHOICE

5. How did you receive the communications from your local utility company? Please select all that apply.

Email
Text message/SMS
Social Media
Electricity utility's website
News coverage (TV, radio, etc.)
Automated voice message sent to my phone
Other, please specify [INSERT TEXT BOX]

MULTI CHOICE

6. What type of information was communicated by your electricity utility? Please select all that apply.

Information on how to register for power interruption alerts and receive real-time notifications.
Alerts on any potential weather events that may cause power interruptions in your area.
Estimated power restoration time after an interruption has occurred.
Safety tips and resources for you to prepare for a power interruption caused by a severe weather event.
The severity of the power interruption caused by a severe weather event (e.g., the number of customers affected)
Actual power restoration time after the interruption.
Other, please specify

SINGLE CHOICE

7. Would you like to receive communications from your electricity utility about power interruptions due to severe weather events in the future?

Yes
No

[IF NO TO Q7 SKIP TO END OF SURVEY, OTHERWISE CONTINUE]

8. And, how important is it to you to receive each of the following types of information from your electricity utility regarding a power interruption due a severe weather event? Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all important and 10 is very important.

Information on how to register for power interruption alerts and receive real-time notifications.

Alerts on any potential weather events that may cause power interruptions in your area.

Estimated power restoration time after an interruption occurred.

Safety tips and resources for you to prepare for a power interruption caused by a severe weather event.

The severity of the power interruption caused by a severe weather event (e.g., the number of customers affected).

Actual power restoration time after the interruption.

SCALE 1-10: 1 'Not at all important, 10 'Very important'

OPEN END

9. Are there any additional types of information that you would like to receive from your electricity utility regarding power interruptions due a severe weather event?

SINGLE CHOICE

10. Thinking about information provided by your electricity utility concerning the estimated time the power would be restored after an interruption. Would you like to be updated if the original estimated time of power restoration changes?

Yes

No

MULTI CHOICE

11. Through which of the following communication channel(s) would you prefer to receive information and updates from your electricity utility about power interruptions due to severe weather events? Please select all that apply.

Email

Text message/SMS

Social media

Electricity Utility's website

News coverage (TV, radio, etc.)

Automated voice message sent to my phone

Another channel, please specify [INSERT TEXT BOX]

Overall Satisfaction and Suggestions

12. Overall, how satisfied are you with communications you received from your electricity utility before, during, and after a power interruption caused by a severe weather event? Using a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is very dissatisfied, 10 is very satisfied and 5 is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Before
During
After

1 Very dissatisfied, 10 Very satisfied, 5 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

OPEN END

13. What improvements, if any, would you to see regarding communications from your electricity utility before, during, and after a power interruption caused by a severe weather event?

Before, please specify
During, please specify
After, please specify

OPEN END

14. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your experiences with your electricity utility and their communication efforts regarding power interruptions caused by severe weather events?

END:

Thank you for sharing your opinions!