




# *San Patricio Electric Cooperative, Inc.*

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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## **Electricity Load Shedding and What it Could Mean to You**

The flow of electric power in Texas is managed by the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. One of ERCOT's primary responsibilities is to make sure the supply of electricity available in Texas is sufficient to meet the demand for electricity. ERCOT oversees 90 percent of Texas' power load, including more than 700 power generation units and 46,500 miles of transmission lines.

When the electric supply provided by generation resources is not sufficient to meet the needs of consumer demand for power, ERCOT enters into emergency operations. The organization will first take a number of steps to reduce demand on the electric grid and increase the available electricity supply. As a last resort effort, after all other options have been exhausted, ERCOT will require utilities to shed load to reduce the strain on the grid and avoid a catastrophic statewide blackout. Such an event would be long-lasting and have a significant impact on all aspects of life.

This means ERCOT will require utilities across the state to implement controlled outages, which will last until the power emergency is resolved by ERCOT. Electric utilities, including San Patricio Electric Cooperative, are obligated to immediately implement load shed procedures when ERCOT instructs.

During a load shed event:

- Members should assume their power could go out without advanced warning. Efforts will be made, as much as possible, to provide advanced notification on pending outages, but circumstances do not always allow that to happen.
- A load shed event is an emergency order by ERCOT, and these controlled outages would be implemented by SPEC's transmission provider, South Texas Electric Cooperative. SPEC will not be able to notify individual members if they may lose power, when they may lose power, or how long the load shed event will last.
- While it is SPEC's goal for outages to rotate during a load shed event, it may not always be possible. In extreme emergencies, ERCOT will require utilities to shed large amounts of load over long periods of time. SPEC may not have the ability to rotate outages without risking the stability of the entire electric grid. Under these circumstances, members may be without power for an extended period of time.

- Utilities are required to continue to comply with ERCOT controlled outage instructions until ERCOT determines that outages are no longer required.
- Members dependent on electrically-powered medical equipment, including those on SPEC's Critical Care list, should have a solid backup plan in place in the event of a power outage. **It is important to note that customers on this list are not excluded from controlled outages and may lose power during a load shed event. If you depend on life-sustaining equipment, have a backup plan in place.**
- The procedure for a member to apply as a **Critical Care** or **Critical Load** customer, according to Public Utility Commission rules, can be found here: [sanpatricioelectric.org/critical-care-critical-load](http://sanpatricioelectric.org/critical-care-critical-load)
- Customers designated as a critical load are not guaranteed an uninterrupted supply of electricity. It is the responsibility of the customer to make necessary arrangements for alternative sources of electric power should a localized outage or load shed event occur.
- Electric utilities will prioritize continuity of service for certain customers whose service is critical to the community during an emergency or those whose service provides major support to the integrity of the electric system during an emergency. Examples include emergency services and hospitals.
- The Public Utility Commission of Texas provides examples for members to reduce electricity use at times when involuntary load shedding events may be implemented. Those examples can be found on here: [www.puc.texas.gov/consumer/facts/Save](http://www.puc.texas.gov/consumer/facts/Save)

Regardless of the nature of a load shedding event, San Patricio Electric Cooperative is committed to ensuring the safe and reliable delivery of electricity to its members 24/7. While the cooperative may not control the issues or conditions that affect ERCOT's load shed orders, we will do everything in our power to restore electricity as quickly as possible when we are safely able to do so.

Additionally, we will work to keep our members informed as much as possible during a load shed event. Here are some tips for receiving communications from SPEC:

- Let us know about any changes to your contact information
- Download our SmartHub App and sign up for notifications
- Follow us on Facebook and Twitter
- Check for updates on our website: [sanpatricioelectric.org/posts](http://sanpatricioelectric.org/posts)