



Why Rural Outages Are Different (And What We're Doing About It)

At Little Ocmulgee EMC, we understand how frustrating power outages can be, especially when you're one of the last to have your lights turned back on. When storms roll through or maintenance work is necessary, our members in rural areas often experience more prolonged outages compared to those in more urban settings. But why is that?

Fewer Meters Per Mile

The biggest difference between rural and urban electric service is density. In cities, utilities often serve dozens or even hundreds of customers per mile of power line. In contrast, we may have just five to seven meters per mile of line in our territory. That means when damage occurs in rural areas, it affects fewer members, but it still takes just as much time and equipment to repair.

More Line, More Exposure

Our service area covers thousands of miles of line, often running through heavily wooded areas, across fields and through swamps. That means more exposure to falling limbs, wildlife interference and lightning strikes. Restoration takes time, especially when crews must travel long distances between outages and navigate difficult terrain.



A Look Back: Rural Electricity Didn't Always Exist

It's easy to take power for granted today, but less than 100 years ago, many rural communities had no access to electricity at all. Power companies, at the time, simply couldn't justify the cost of building lines into sparsely populated areas. That's why electric cooperatives like Little Ocmulgee EMC were formed—to bring power to rural America when no one else would. We've come a long way since then, and we remain committed to providing safe, reliable electricity to every member we serve, no matter how remote.

Why Not Just Bury the Lines?

We often hear: "If the lines were underground, we wouldn't have this problem." It's a fair statement, and in some cases, underground lines are a good solution. But in most rural settings, they come with serious trade-offs:

- **Cost:** Installing underground infrastructure can cost five to 10 times more than overhead lines.
- **Access:** When something goes wrong underground, repairs are harder to locate and take longer to fix.
- **Soil and Water Conditions:** In parts of our region, wet soil or a high water table makes underground installation unreliable and even more expensive to maintain.

We do use underground lines where it makes sense, such as in subdivisions, commercial developments or areas with high tree exposure, but for long stretches of rural service, overhead is still the most practical and cost-effective option.

We're Always Working to Improve Reliability

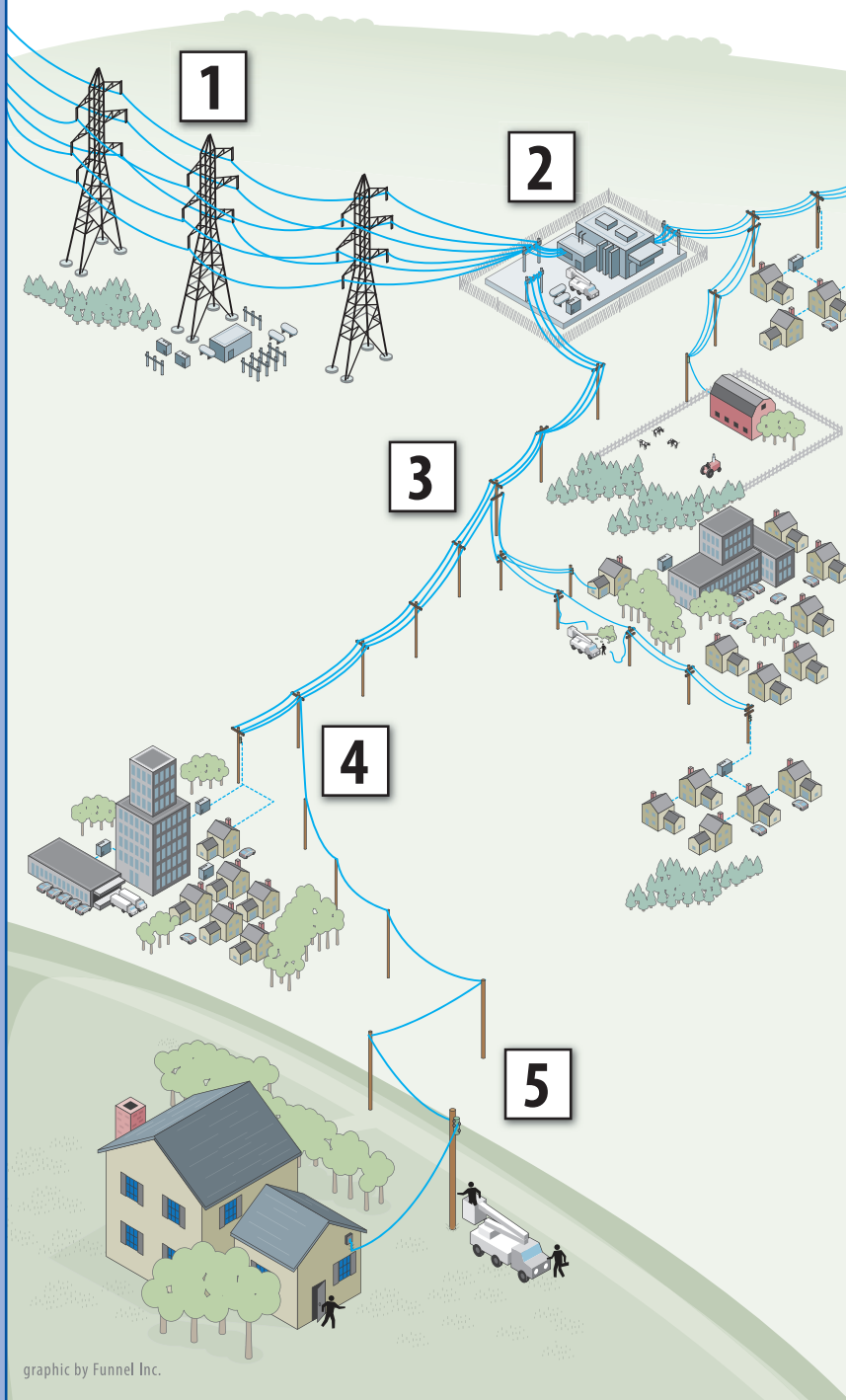
While some outages are unavoidable, we're investing in right-of-way clearing, system upgrades and smart technology that helps us detect problems faster and restore power more efficiently. Our crews work day and night to respond quickly, safely and thoroughly whenever outages occur.

We thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to improve the reliability of your electric service—no matter where you live.

Powering Up

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible.

Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark:



1 High-Voltage Transmission Lines

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2 Distribution Substation

Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist down the line.

3 Main Distribution Lines

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

4 Tap Lines

If local outages persist, supply lines called tap lines are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes.

5 Individual Homes

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issues.

Utility Notification Requirements for Anyone Working Within 10 Feet of a High-Voltage Line

Contractors and landowners have substantial compliance responsibility when working near an electric utility's underground and overhead distribution power lines. Georgia law and Little Ocmulgee EMC regulations require contractors and landowners to contact Georgia 811 before working near power lines.

Little Ocmulgee EMC hopes to avoid personal injuries, unnecessary power outages and line damage associated with accidents involving its electric distribution facilities. Contractors can avoid substantial equipment damage and repair costs, as well as personal injuries to their employees, if they abide by these requirements.

These regulations apply to contractors, well drillers, farmers, landowners and others who may have a personal business interest in work performed near power lines. While the following rules address overhead power lines, Georgia law requires that anyone digging in Georgia must contact Georgia 811 at least three days before construction begins so utility companies can be contacted to mark underground facilities.

High-Voltage Safety Act

The High-Voltage Safety Act became law in Georgia on July 1, 1992. This act requires individuals performing work within 10 feet of overhead high-voltage electric power lines to notify Georgia 811 during its regular business hours at least 72 hours prior to beginning the work (excluding weekends and holidays).

Georgia 811 will then contact the owner of the power lines to take appropriate safety measures to prevent injuries, property damage and interruptions of utility service resulting from accidental or inadver-

tent contact with high-voltage electric lines. Failure to call Georgia 811 constitutes a violation of the law and can result in fines and penalties, in addition to liability for repair of damages.

Contractors are encouraged to become familiar with the details of the High-Voltage Safety Act. Information is available directly from Georgia 811. Use the same telephone number for notifications or contact them on their website.

To contact Georgia 811 statewide or nationwide, simply dial 811. You can also submit an inquiry online at www.georgia811.com.

Special Notice to Farmers

Modern farm equipment can be raised or lowered to allow for harvesting greater amounts with fewer delays. Use of this equipment requires that you check fields and roads where your equipment may come within 10 feet of overhead power lines.

The power lines were installed to comply with the National Electrical Safety Code clearance guidelines at the time of construction. If any part of your equipment will be within 10 feet of overhead power lines, you must notify Georgia 811 at least 72 hours before you work under the power lines.

Wells and Pumps

A well driller and the landowner bear responsibility to notify Georgia 811 when any equipment or materials will be within 10 feet of overhead high-voltage power lines. For safety reasons, installation of wells and well pumps at distances closer than 30 feet from any overhead power line should generally

be avoided, but in locations where the options for well placement are limited, Little Ocmulgee EMC will help determine the minimum clearance requirements, as specified in the National Electrical Safety Code.

Minimum clearance requirements for the location of wells and well pumps vary according to the line voltage and certain site-specific attributes, and Little Ocmulgee EMC should be consulted to determine the appropriate minimum recommended distance. Clearance requirements vary with the voltage of the power line, height of the line aboveground, distance to poles that support the line and other local factors that determine where a drilling rig will be stationed for installation and future maintenance or pump replacement activities.

A Little Ocmulgee EMC representative will meet with the well driller and/or landowner to determine the minimum acceptable distance if the desired pump location is closer than 30 feet from an overhead line.

Easements

Little Ocmulgee EMC's service rules and regulations require a contractor to notify Little Ocmulgee EMC directly if proposed work and/or construction will be performed inside the utility's easement. In most cases, the easement extends 20 feet on each side of a power line. Little Ocmulgee EMC will provide the necessary protection to avoid hazards. Again, consideration should be given to providing plenty of time to respond.

Call Little Ocmulgee EMC's Engineering Department at (912) 568-7171 or (800) 342-1290 and ask to speak with a representative.

Notice of Patronage Capital Assignment for 2025

Because Little Ocmulgee EMC is a not-for-profit cooperative, revenue collected in excess of expenses is eventually returned to the co-op's member-owners, our electric customers. After each year is completed, margins are assigned to members' accounts so they can be paid later as capital credits.

Assigned margins are retained for several years to be used, in place of borrowed money, as a source of funding for the construction of new lines and other utility plant expenses. This helps the cooperative keep the cost of providing service as low as possible. When financial conditions are favorable, the margins are returned as capital credits to members.

The assignment is made by applying the percentage of the cooperative's margins (revenues in excess of expenses) to each member's total billing for the year (excluding sales tax). In addition, margins are assigned to Little Ocmulgee EMC by other organizations with which it is associated, such as Cooperative Finance Corp., CoBank, Gresco, Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange and Southeastern Data Corp. The percentage assigned from these associated organizations is assigned to each member each year in the same manner as above.

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} 2025 \text{ total operating margins} + \\ 2025 \text{ total associated organizations} \end{array}}{2025 \text{ total sales of electric energy}} = \frac{\$ 1,466,399}{\$ 28,270,054} = 0.051871091$$

Little Ocmulgee EMC

2025 Patronage Capital Assignment Factors

| | Allocation Factor | If your total bills were: (excluding sales tax) | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | | \$500 | \$1,000 | \$2,000 |
| 2025 patronage capital assigned for Little Ocmulgee EMC | 0.035130391 | \$ 17.57 | \$ 35.13 | \$ 70.27 |
| 2025 patronage capital assigned from associated organizations | 0.016740699 | \$ 8.37 | \$ 16.74 | \$ 33.48 |
| 2025 total patronage capital assigned | 0.051871091 | \$ 25.94 | \$ 51.87 | \$ 103.75 |

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To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary
for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410;
- (2) Fax:** (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email:** program.intake@usda.gov.

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