



**Hawaiian Electric  
Maui Electric  
Hawai'i Electric Light**

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Hawaiian Electric Companies geared up for hurricane season, urge customers to prepare**

**HILO, May 29, 2019** – The Hawaiian Electric Companies have been working to build more resilient island grids ahead of the 2019 Central Pacific hurricane season, which begins June 1. Forecasts say up to eight tropical cyclones could develop this season, underscoring the need for customers to have emergency plans in place.

Hawaiian Electric, Maui Electric and Hawai'i Electric Light work year-round to strengthen the electric grids so that they are better able to withstand powerful storms. Much of that work centers around upgrading and reinforcing poles, lines and equipment and clearing vegetation.

Here are some examples of the companies' ongoing resilience work: Nearly \$17 million was spent in 2018 to clear trees and vegetation from around power lines and equipment, resulting in fewer and briefer outages during storms.

- **Hawaiian Electric:**
  - Replaced wooden poles with eight steel poles at Wiliwilinui Ridge Trail above Wai'alaie Iki. The new poles support high-voltage lines feeding Windward and East O'ahu.
  - Upgraded infrastructure to improve system reliability in West and Central O'ahu.
  - In efforts to build community resilience, Hawaiian Electric is working with public agencies, volunteers and nonprofits to develop recovery strategies for some of the island's most vulnerable areas.
- **Maui Electric:**
  - Continued upgrades of utility poles rated to withstand higher wind gusts.
  - Planned pilot installation of insulated power lines to reduce outages caused by falling trees and branches on conductors in forested areas of Upcountry Maui and East Moloka'i.
  - Planned installation of Trip-Savers, a new device on power lines that helps isolate and protect the electrical system during outages, in parts of Upcountry Maui.
- **Hawai'i Island:**
  - Continued collaboration with public agencies and community partners to promote emergency preparedness and hasten power restoration efforts following natural disasters.
  - Installed Trip-Savers and similar devices on power lines that help isolate and protect the electrical system during outages.
  - Planned installation of tie-lines between circuits that provide quicker restoration options in the event of an interruption.

One of the best ways to weather storms is to be prepared. Residents can refer to the companies' Handbook for Emergency Preparedness available at <https://www.hawaiielectriclight.com/prepare>.

Printed copies of the handbook are available at Hawai'i Electric Light's business offices in Hilo and Kona and at the Hilo and Kona public libraries. You may also call us at 327-0543 to request copies. In addition, employees will distribute free copies of our handbook at the 2019 Hawai'i County Disaster Preparation Fair on Saturday, June 22, at the West Hawai'i Civic Center.

Residents should develop their own emergency plans and consider these tips:

- Gather emergency supplies, such as a battery-powered radio, flashlights, lanterns, and batteries. Be prepared to monitor storm-related communications issued over emergency broadcast radio stations.
- Store enough water, non-perishable food, medicine, and personal hygiene supplies for your family members and pets to last at least 14 days.
- Turn off and unplug all unnecessary electric appliances and equipment during a storm or a power outage. When power comes back and is stable, plug in the equipment one at a time.
- Shut off your electricity at the main breaker or switch if you need to evacuate.
- Consider having a backup generator if you are dependent on an electrically-powered life support system. Or, make plans to go to an alternate location where electricity will be available. Be prepared to take your medical equipment and medications with you.
- If your business or residence is equipped with a backup generator, learn how to properly operate the device to avoid causing damage or injury.
- Prepare a list of emergency contacts that includes phone numbers for insurance agents, vendors, physicians or any other important individuals.
- If you see a downed power line, assume it is energized and dangerous. Stay away from downed power lines – at least 30 feet or more.
- For power outage updates, follow Hawai'i Electric Light on Twitter @HIElectricLight.

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