



## Electric Load Shed & Critical Load Designation

Tri-County Electric Cooperative is a not-for-profit, member-owned electric provider. We are a distribution cooperative providing electricity to more than 100,000 members in the north Texas region. Tri-County Electric Co-op, along with 15 other member-cooperatives, own Brazos Electric Power Cooperative, a transmission cooperative.

### THE STATE'S ELECTRIC GRID

ERCOT manages the flow of electricity for the majority of Texas, powering more than 27 million Texas homes and businesses. As the independent system operator (ISO), ERCOT is responsible for approximately 90% of the state's electric load and ensures the state has sufficient electricity (capacity) to meet Texans' electric needs (demand). More than 1,250 generation units and 54,100 miles of transmission lines fall under ERCOT's jurisdiction. ERCOT reports current and predicted grid conditions daily on their website using a color-coded dial system. When demand approaches capacity, placing the grid in jeopardy due to low electric reserves, ERCOT may call for conservation or even emergency action to protect the grid.

ERCOT has four energy emergency levels:

- Voluntary Conservation Notice: ERCOT requests Texans to reduce electric use if safe to do so.
- Conservation Appeal: ERCOT requests Texans to conserve all energy possible. The potential to enter a higher emergency level is possible.
- Energy Emergency Level 1: Electric reserves across the state drop below 2,500 MW and are not expected to recover within 30 minutes. Conservation is critical to avoid rotating outages.
- Energy Emergency Level 2: Electric reserves across the state drop below 2,000 MW and are not expected to recover within 30 minutes. Conservation is critical to avoid rotating outages. Large industrial users with power emergency contracts will be turned off and demand response programs will go into effect.
- Energy Emergency Level 3: Electric reserves across the state drop below 1,500 MW and are not expected to recover within 30 minutes. ERCOT will issue load shed obligations to transmission companies. Power providers are responsible for shedding load, and typically choose to enact controlled, rotating outages. Conservation remains critical.

An Energy Emergency Level 3 is last resort and will only be used when ERCOT has exhausted all other avenues to protect the grid. If reserves continue to drop and demand exceeds capacity, the electric grid could fail causing a state-wide blackout. ERCOT predicts it would take months for the grid to recover after a blackout.

### TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE & ERCOT

Tri-County Electric Co-op closely monitors the ERCOT grid. When ERCOT reports demand is high, the co-op will encourage members to conserve energy by posting energy-saving tips on our website and social media. Members can find energy-saving tips on the Tri-County Electric Co-op website, Touchstone Energy Cooperatives website, the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) website. We will take all steps possible to notify our members of the state's electric grid condition prior to taking emergency action. In an Energy Emergency Level 3 event, Tri-County Electric Co-op works with Brazos, our transmission co-op, to meet ERCOT load shed requirements through controlled, rotating outages. Rotating outages and physically turning off electricity to our members goes against our entire mission and business model, but we comply with the ERCOT requirement to protect the grid.



Members can expect the following during load shed events:

- All members are subject to load shed and can assume their power may go out without advanced warning. Tri-County Electric Co-op will take every available option to notify members prior to a load shed event but cannot ensure notification.
- Members designated as **Critical Load** are subject to load shed and can assume their power may go out without advanced warning. Tri-County Electric Co-op will take every available option to notify members prior to a load shed event but cannot ensure notification. Critical load designation does not ensure continuous power, and we encourage members to work with us to interconnect alternative energy sources (generators, batteries, etc.). It is the member's responsibility to notify the co-op through proper procedure to request critical load designation.
- Members designated as **Commercial Medical** (including hospitals, urgent care, outpatient, blood supply, etc.) are subject to load shed and can assume their power may go out without advanced warning. Tri-County Electric Co-op will take every available option to notify members prior to a load shed event but cannot ensure notification. Commercial Medical designation does not ensure continuous power, and we encourage members to work with us to interconnect alternative energy sources (generators, batteries, etc.). It is the member's responsibility to notify the co-op through proper procedure to request critical load designation.
- Residential members dependent on electric-powered, life-sustaining equipment are not promised continuous power, and we encourage members to work with us to interconnect alternative energy sources (generators, batteries, etc.).
- Tri-County Electric Cooperative will prioritize critical community services, including but not limited to hospitals, emergency care facilities, water/sewer facilities, natural gas facilities, emergency sirens, 911 dispatch centers, police and fire stations during energy emergency events. Every member can assume their power may go out, but we will do our best to prioritize critical community services. We encourage members to work with us to interconnect alternative energy sources (generators, batteries, etc.).
- Tri-County Electric Cooperative strives to be transparent and provide information that is available through every possible communication channel. However, since ERCOT issues energy emergencies, we may not have information available to members including which members will be out of power, for how long the load shed event will continue, and when members can expect to have power. As a distribution electric provider, it is our responsibility to comply with the order until ERCOT determines load shed is no longer required. In extreme energy emergency events (like Winter Storm Uri in February 2021), members may have extended periods (i.e.: two hours down and 30 minutes energized) of no power during the rotating outages for us to meet our load shed requirements.

### **Applying for Critical Load Designation**

A member may apply for Critical Load designation by completing our online application. Members may request access to this form by reaching out to [clewis@tcectexas.com](mailto:clewis@tcectexas.com).

Every application will be thoroughly reviewed, and the member will be notified of their application status. The member is responsible for notifying the cooperative of any changes and maintaining Critical Load designation by applying bi-annually/every two years. Critical Load designation does not ensure continuous power, and we encourage members to work with us to acquire alternative energy sources (generators, batteries, etc.). It is the member's responsibility to notify the co-op through proper procedure to request critical load designation.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative is here to take care of our members—rain or shine, hot or cold. As your cooperative, trusted energy advisor and community partner, we put our members at the forefront of every decision. Our Member Service team is available to answer any questions you may have. We do our best to transparently communicate to our members and ensure you are informed on your cooperative, including during ERCOT energy emergency events.



## Resources

### Tri-County Electric Cooperative

- Website: <https://tcectexas.com>
- Facebook: [TCECTexas](#)
- Mobile App: [MyTriCountyTX](#), available on the [Apple Store](#) and [Google Play](#)
- Enroll in Text & Email Notifications: <https://www.tcectexas.com/register>

### Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT)

- Website: <https://www.ercot.com>
- Facebook: [ERCOTISO](#)

### Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT)

- Website: <https://www.puc.texas.gov>
- Facebook: [puctx](#)

*Tri-County Electric Cooperative constantly strives to keep our members informed. This informational document is provided to members under Senate Bill 3 passed by the Texas State Legislature during the 2021 legislative session.*