There are many causes of power outages – wind, ice and snow, lightning, construction damage to underground lines, traffic accidents affecting power poles, equipment failures and more. Major storms or other natural disasters sometimes cause major outages – affecting a large number of customers over an extended period of time. AEP offers the following information to help you weather the storm.

**Should I call AEP?**
In the immediate aftermath of a major storm, we ask that you call only to report safety hazards such as downed power lines or equipment that is sparking. During major storms, our telephone lines can become overloaded with customer calls. In these situations, we are aware of major damage to long-distance transmission lines and distribution circuits.

**Can I get information on-line?**
Yes. You can get information on-line if you have a laptop or other battery-powered, Internet-connected device. Visit our storm information site at www.aep.com/lightsout for the latest storm updates.

You can also report an outage on-line.

**Outage Checklist**
* Check all circuit breakers or fuses to help determine if your service outage might be the result of a household problem.
* If you have significant water damage in your home, call an electrician.
* Inspect the area outside your home near the meter. If the meter or any of the piping and wires on the wall of your home or office are gone or look damaged, call an electrician.
* Turn off your major appliances so that you can start them gradually once power is restored to avoid damage to sensitive equipment. Leave one light on so that you know when your power is restored.

**Outage Safety Checklist**
* Don't operate lanterns, heaters or fuel-fired cook stoves without adequate ventilation.
* Always refuel appliances outside, away from flames or sparks.
* Do not burn charcoal indoors because it releases carbon monoxide.
* Wipe up fuel spills immediately.
* Don't allow children to carry candles or oil lamps in the house. A fall could spell disaster!

**Outage Tips**
* Never touch a downed wire regardless of how harmless it looks! And keep others away from this potential hazard. To report any downed lines or equipment, call AEP at the number on your electric bill.

**Heat**
During a winter outage, your house will stay warm for several hours. Your home will stay warmer if it is well insulated, has storm windows and windows are sealed.

** Appliances**
Turn off appliances that were operating at the time of the outage, including your heating system. Leave one light on so that you will know when power is restored.
Once electricity is restored, do not turn all appliances on at once. This will permit the power to be put back on line without being knocked off again by the automatic limiting devices that protect our system from overloads.

**Water**
If there is sufficient warning before the storm, fill your bathtub and spare containers with water in case your electric water pump or the local water system are affected by a power failure. This should be enough for drinking, cooking and washing until service is restored. Toilets can be flushed by pouring a bucket of water into the bowl.

**Food**
If you have advanced warning before a storm, turn the controls on your refrigerator to the coldest position. Food will stay frozen between 36 and 48 hours in a fully-loaded freezer if you keep the door closed. If the freezer is half-full, the food will generally keep for 24 hours. A freezer full of meat generally keeps frozen longer than a freezer full of baked goods. During winter months, food can also be stored in cold areas of your house or in an unheated garage.

**What does AEP do to manage a major storm?**
AEP continually monitors national and local weather reports so it is prepared for impending storms. This allows AEP to work on staffing for restoration efforts even before the storm hits.

During major storm efforts, customer service centers operate in "storm mode," utilizing extra telephone lines and bringing in additional representatives to better serve our customers. They also employ advanced telephone technologies to handle the unusually large volume of customer calls. These systems allow customers to report an outage without speaking to a representative and provide updates regarding the restoration effort.

**Why can’t I talk directly with a customer service representative?**
During major outages, it is unlikely that you will speak directly with a service representative due to the high volume of calls associated with a major outage. However, our telephone technologies will allow you to leave information about your outage. In addition, our communications systems give priority to outage calls dealing with safety concerns – such as downed power lines – so that they receive service as quickly as possible.

**Why can’t an agent tell me when my power will be restored?**
It is impossible to accurately predict restorations of specific circuits serving particular residences because of the many challenges that restoration workers face.

**What is my best source of information on the restoration effort?**
AEP works hard to update the local news media on the overall progress of restoration efforts. AEP issues informational releases to the news media regarding restoration progress at least three times a day during major power outages. Listening to the radio, or checking AEP’s web site – www.aep.com – are the best ways for you to be informed of storm restoration progress. Be sure to have an emergency kit, equipped with a battery-operated radio and fresh batteries, so you’re ready in case of a major power outage.

**How does AEP decide which customers to restore first?**
AEP works to restore power using the swiftest and most humane schedule possible. Efforts are staged so that power will initially be restored to hospitals, emergency response agencies, essential AEP facilities, other public utilities and public shelters.

**How does AEP mobilize crews during major outages?**
During a major storm, AEP calls in workers from portions of its 11-state energy delivery territory to assist local employees. AEP also enlists the help of personnel from other electric companies through mutual assistance agreements as well as contract workers.

**How does AEP handle tree damage?**
AEP contractors conduct tree trimming throughout the year to keep power lines free of limbs and debris. Following a storm, AEP contractors do not remove fallen limbs or branches from your property. For tree removal, you will need to call a landscape or tree contractor.

Do not attempt to remove tree limbs or debris within 10 feet of a power line. Stay completely away from any downed power line or sparking equipment. If you notice downed lines or sparking equipment, please call us at the number on your electric bill as soon as possible.
Why would AEP trucks pass by my house without repairing anything? 
This can happen because work needs to be done at a nearby location before service can be restored to you and your neighbors.

Why can my home be the only one on the block without power? 
Fuses or circuit breakers in your home could have tripped and halted power, tree limbs could have fallen on the line serving your home, fuses on the transformer that serves your home may have tripped or could be damaged, and the primary line feeding the transformer could be damaged.

Why would I lose electricity in only part of my house? 
You could have tripped a circuit breaker, blown a fuse or have a broken connector or wire at one of the service leads to your house. Sometimes damage to these leads leaves only the 120-volt outlets (or some of them) working. In this case, larger appliances that need 240-volt service – such as water heaters, air conditioners and ovens – may be inoperable until repairs are made. It is safe to use the outlets you have available while you check with an electrician. However, if some of your lights are extremely bright or extremely dim, you should avoid using outlets connected to these circuits to avoid potential damage to equipment. If there is a problem with a service lead to your home, AEP crews will repair the wires when they arrive to restore service.

Backup generators 
Some customers use backup, or standby, generators to provide power during outages. AEP needs to be aware of backup generators because of safety hazards they can pose to line workers – and to you. Please notify us if you are using a backup generator.

The problem arises when power from the backup generators feed power onto distribution lines, which can electrocute personnel working on the lines. On the other hand, power from AEP lines can feed into the generator and cause a fire at your residence. To avoid these hazards, be sure to have your generator installed by an electrician and be sure that it has a manual transfer switch to isolate the device from the power grid. Remember that appliances can be connected directly to the generator independent of the household wiring. Make sure that all manufacturers’ instructions are followed and that only the recommended number of appliances are plugged into the generator.

Why do I sometimes experience brief outages that call for resetting of appliances? 
Usually, these outages occur when a protective device, called a recloser, detects interference on the line. If interference is detected, the line will de-energize briefly to determine if the problem is prolonged or only temporary. If the problem is temporary, the line will re-energize quickly. If the problem is prolonged, the line will de-energize.