

Powercor Australia Ltd
ACN 064 651 109
ABN 89-064 651 109

Head Office
40 Market Street Melbourne

DX 433 MELBOURNE
www.powercor.com.au

Address all correspondence to:
Locked Bag 14090
Melbourne Victoria 8001

For all media enquiries:
24-Hour Media Service:
Ph: (03) 9683 4342
Fax: 03) 9683 4899



Wednesday, 3 December 2008

POWERCOR GEARS UP FOR THE SUMMER STORM AND BUSHFIRE SEASON

Powercor is undertaking extensive preparations to ensure its electricity network and people are well prepared for extreme weather conditions including storms, bushfires, and heatwaves over summer.

Summer is traditionally the worst time of year for storms and when unpredictable and intense weather conditions have the potential to cause widespread power outages.

High temperatures also sometimes cause a spike in electricity consumption, when appliances including air conditioners put extra pressure on Victoria's electricity supplies.

General Manager Electricity Networks, Garry Audley, said Powercor had learnt a great deal from major storms earlier this year and in years gone by.

He said Powercor is committed to responding to these events effectively and ensuring customer impacts are minimised during the busy summer season.

"Powercor invests millions of dollars in inspecting and maintaining its electricity distribution network to help keep Victoria's power supplies safe and reliable," Mr Audley said.

Examples of the works Powercor has undertaken in preparation for this summer storm and bushfire season include:-

- Electrical load testing and system upgrades in areas likely to need extra electrical capacity, such as busy tourist towns
- Comprehensive vegetation management programs and follow-up vehicle and aerial audits prior to bushfire season - ensuring trees and vegetation are not growing too close to power lines
- Keeping sufficient replacement materials and employees on standby to help deal with major events should they occur
- Improving the accuracy and reliability of pre-recorded outage information – often eliminating the need for customers to speak directly with a customer service representative
- Using the Powercor call centre, website and local radio to keep customers up-to-date during emergencies

MEDIA RELEASE

Although major and widespread outages are rare, customers can also help themselves to remain safe and prepare for prolonged supply interruptions by:-

- Having a suitable reserve water supply for home and/ or animals if electric pumps lose supply
- Staying away from powerlines that have come to ground
- Unplugging computers and other sensitive appliances during lightning storms to avoid any risk of power surges
- Ensuring mobile phone batteries are fully charged and if possible, that an old fashioned phone WITH a cord is on hand – cordless phone base stations won't work without electricity
- Having a battery-operated radio and spare batteries on hand
- Staying indoors as the storm approaches and ensuring pets are secured safely under shelter
- Learning how to manually operate electric powered garage doors and gates
- Enabling the “autosave” function on computers to protect important documents during a power interruption. Computers are among the most sensitive electrical appliances to be impacted by even small power fluctuations
- Keeping a list of emergency contact numbers on hand, including Powercor's service difficulties and faults line on **13 24 12** and the Victorian Bushfire Information Hotline on 1800 240 667.

“We know from experience that summer can be a challenging period, but we are confident our focus on reducing the frequency and severity of faults, combined with our readiness to restore power supplies safely and quickly will hold us in good stead,” Mr Audley said.

Media inquiries: Powercor Australia's 24-Hour Media Service (03) 9683 4342.