



## The 2009 Ice Storm and What We Should Learn

On January 27 a major, even historic, ice, sleet, and snow storm pounded Arkansas. What happened and what can we learn from it? Below are ten facts about the magnitude of the storm and the ongoing recovery efforts.

1. **32 counties** were declared disaster areas by Governor Beebe.
2. **25 counties** were declared disaster areas by President Obama.
3. **53 emergency shelters** were activated during the crisis.
4. **More than 123,000 gallons** of drinking water and **521,000 meals** were delivered to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) staging areas in Fayetteville and Jonesboro.
5. **Damage to public infrastructure is estimated at almost \$80 million.** This excludes damages incurred by citizens and businesses, which will not be known for some time.
6. At the peak of the power outage, **over 300,000 citizens were without electricity**, equal to over 10 percent of the state's entire population.
7. **Over 30,000 power poles were downed or damaged.** The average replacement cost for each downed pole is \$1,400 when factoring in labor, material and other overhead costs.
8. **Tens of thousands** of spans of wire were downed or damaged.
9. **Over 10,000 linesmen** and other ground personnel, including workers from over 20 states, worked around the clock in harsh conditions to restore power to Arkansans.
10. **Progress Arkansas' member Entergy Arkansas alone lost 71 different distribution segments** stretching for miles with every single pole downed or damaged. Distribution segments are separate sections that together comprise the electric grid.

Winter storms and tornados are a part of life in Arkansas, and it is imperative that citizens and businesses be prepared to lessen the impact on our daily lives, our energy supply, and our state's economy. Below are a few simple things that can be done to reduce storm impact around the home. With the spring tornado season around the corner, and a pattern of very volatile recent weather, these suggestions are timely and important.

1. **Remove vegetation around power lines.** Utilities have tree trimming programs, but citizens should be diligent in making sure trees on their property are properly trimmed, especially those that hang over roofs or are near windows.
2. **Turn your refrigerator to its coldest setting before a storm.** This will keep food longer, which will save the cost of replacing spoiled food.
3. **Unplug unnecessary electronics** to protect them from electricity surges.
4. **Have emergency equipment on hand** such as flashlights, generators, batteries, and radios and make sure they are in working order.
5. **Stock up on bottled water, non-perishable food, baby supplies and other essentials.**
6. **Tie down or remove outside equipment** - trampolines, lawn chairs, and other items that when blown around can wreak havoc.
7. **Have a pre-arranged emergency plan on where to meet family members** if a storm disrupts communications and a pre-set place to go (i.e., a friend or relative) when there is a weather or other emergency.

These are just a few easy things that citizens can do. Please [click here](#) for a more complete storm checklist from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).