



## Think Ahead: What Will Happen If Your Power Goes Out?

Hartselle Utilities had 71 power outages in 2022; in 2021 we had 74 power interruptions. During the December event, when TVA asked HU and other distributors to curtail power, we had very little notice. The rest of the outages were unplanned – and out of our control.

“We can’t guarantee you’ll have power all the time,” says Hartselle Utilities General Manager Bob Sittason, “and as reliable as they are, TVA can’t guarantee power, either. If you have medical equipment in your home, or mission-critical equipment in your business, you need an emergency or backup plan in case the power goes off.”

For some people, Sittason explains, a backup plan may simply be stockpiling batteries to run breathing equipment, or having a place to go if the power goes out. Often, he explains, people will bring a loved one home from the hospital with medical equipment or a medical device, and during the transition, while they’re trying to get the patient situated, won’t think about the possibility of a power outage. But, he urges caregivers to create their emergency plan right away.

Likewise, companies with computers or other equipment should consider a backup power source, Sittason recommends. “If you have essential equipment that takes over an hour to power down safely, you need to have a plan in place for how you’ll handle that if your power is interrupted.”

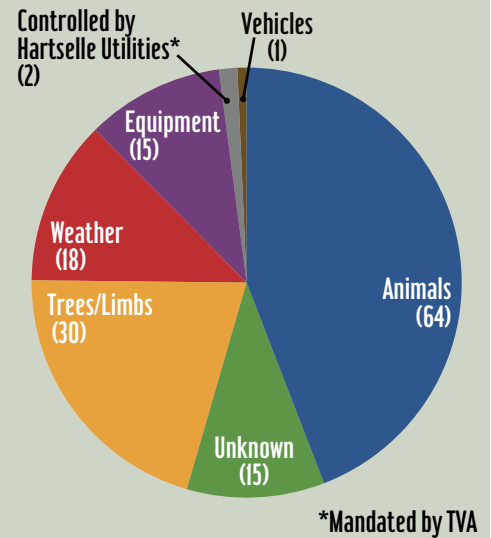
“People think about power outages in bad weather. But, over the past two years, 44 percent of our outages were caused by squirrels, raccoons, possums, snake, birds, and other animals,” Sittason reports. “And that doesn’t count the ten percent of outages where we couldn’t find the cause – which could have been animals, too. While thankfully they’re rare, outages caused by animals, equipment failure, vehicles, or of unknown origin could happen at any time. We can’t provide our customers advance notice, because most of

### Hartselle Utilities’ Power Outages Are Rarely Voluntary - Or Planned

Of the 145 power outages on our system in 2021 and 2022, only two were controlled by Hartselle Utilities (and those were mandated by TVA). While we strive to make electricity as reliable as possible, we cannot guarantee power.

In case your power goes out suddenly, every household should have at least the following:

- ✓ Flashlight with working batteries
- ✓ Extra batteries
- ✓ Water (at least one gallon per person)
- ✓ Food (non-perishable, easy to prepare)
- ✓ Battery-powered or hand-crank radio
- ✓ First aid kit
- ✓ Family and emergency contact information



the time, we don’t know it’s going to happen.”

For maintenance, HU crews typically work on the system hot, meaning they don’t cut the power off when working on power lines, Sittason emphasizes. Crews maintain a tree-trimming plan designed to curb issues from downed trees and limbs during normal weather. However, Sittason points out that it’s difficult to predict what will happen to tree limbs during extreme weather. There were 30 outages over the past two years due to downed trees and tree limbs.

Backup plans should be practical, Sittason recommends. “Our system, as a whole, had a total of 60 hours of outages in 2022, in 71 events combined. The average customer was not affected by all 71 events; in fact, one event only affected 12 customers. Having a backup plan doesn’t necessarily mean buying the biggest generator you can find.”



Have you signed up to donate to Operation Warm? All money donated through Hartselle Utilities helps Hartselle residents.

## Operation Warm Needs Your Help

Life brings the unexpected. Families often are doing fine – until an accident or unexpected event sends their budget out of whack. Suddenly, they face hard choices: do they buy food, medicine, gas ... or pay their utility bill?

That’s why utility assistance programs exist.

Once a family falls behind in their utility bill, the costs add up quickly. “We charge a five percent penalty for late payments,” explains HU Customer Service Manager Tim Mitchell. “Over 20 months, if a customer is late every month, they’re paying the equivalent of an extra bill, probably without even realizing it.”

Locally, Community Action Partnership of North Alabama helps people who are having trouble paying their utility bills. Households are given assistance up to twice

*Continued on back*

**To contribute to Operation Warm, complete this form and return it to Hartselle Utilities**

- Please add \$\_\_\_\_\_ to my monthly Hartselle Utilities (HU) bill. I understand that I have the right to stop this contribution at any time by giving HU written notice, and that the amount I have indicated will be added to my monthly bill until such notice is received.
- I'm already an Operation Warm partner. Please increase my monthly donation to \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- Please add a ONE-TIME donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to my bill. I understand that this amount will be added to ONE of my monthly bills.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Customer Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Sign and return this form to Hartselle Utilities, 1010 Sparkman St NW, Hartselle, AL 35640  
 Or email it to [inquiries@hartselleutilities.org](mailto:inquiries@hartselleutilities.org)  
 Operation Warm is administered by Community Action Partnership of North Alabama, Inc.  
 All monies donated are used for local families in need.

**Operation Warm (continued from front)**

a year for energy (electric or natural gas); once during the heating season, which ends May 31, and once during the cooling season, which will run from June through October. The majority of the funds for energy assistance are provided by the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

Unfortunately, LIHEAP's funding is not enough to help everyone who needs assistance, and some families with emergency situations may fall out of the program's income cap. Community and donation-funded programs, such as Hartselle Utilities' Operation Warm, help bridge that gap.

In recent years, however, donations to Operation Warm through Hartselle Utilities have fallen. Currently our customers only give an average of \$150 a month.

In January and February of this year alone, Community Action helped over 1,400 households in Morgan, Lawrence, Marion, Cullman, and Winston counties. If you would like to help them make an even greater impact, consider giving to Operation Warm today: if 60 Hartselle Utilities customers sign up to donate as little as \$2 a month, we can double the impact we're currently making. 100 percent of the money donated through Operation Warm is used to help people in Hartselle.

In addition to providing assistance with electric and natural gas utility bills, Community Action provides help with water bills through the federal Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). If you or someone you know is having trouble paying a utility bill, contact Community Action as soon as you know the utility bill is out of reach: applications can take up to 15 days to process. For more information, visit <https://capna.org/energy-assistance>.

To enroll in Operation Warm, complete the form above and mail or drop it off at Hartselle Utilities at 1010 Sparkman St NW, or take a picture of it (your form MUST be signed) and email it to [inquiries@hartselleutilities.org](mailto:inquiries@hartselleutilities.org).

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**Hartselle Utilities will be closed**  
**Monday, May 29**  
 for  
**Memorial Day**

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**A message from the Hartselle Fire Department:**

**ADEM: Annual Air Quality "NO BURN"**

No vegetative or land-clearing burning is allowed from May 1 to October 31 in Morgan, Lawrence, or Madison counties. Some agricultural and silvicultural burning may be allowed during these months with prior approval from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) and the Alabama Forestry Commission.

If you have any questions, or for a complete list of counties included in the burn ban, contact the ADEM Air Division at (334) 271-7879 or (334) 271-7897, or visit their website at [forestry.alabama.gov](http://forestry.alabama.gov).



**Manage Your Account Online**

Customer Portal



Mobile App



Scan the above codes with your smartphone to access Hartselle Utilities' Customer Portal or to install our Mobile App.

**Hartselle Recycling Calendar**

Here are the next four months of Hartselle's Recycling Calendar. If you have a question about sanitation pickup or containers, or need to know your Recycling Pickup Zone, visit [hartselle.org](http://hartselle.org) or call Public Works at (256) 773-2643.

April '23							May '23						
Sun	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Sun	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1	30	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31			

June '23							July '23						
Sun	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Sun	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
25	26	27	28	29	30	1	30	31					

Zone 1.A	Zone 2.A	Zone 3.A	Zone 4.A
Zone 1.B	Zone 2.B	Zone 3.B	Zone 4.B

For the full Recycling Pickup Calendar and Zone Map, visit [hartselle.org](http://hartselle.org)

**Have a non-emergency question or a question about your bill? Email us at [inquiries@hartselleutilities.org](mailto:inquiries@hartselleutilities.org).** We try to respond to billing and general questions within 24 hours; service issues that need investigation may take up to 48 hours. **To report a gas leak, sewer backup or power outage, call our office.** Our phones are answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week. During business hours (M-F, 7:30 am - 4:30 pm), call (256) 773-3340. After hours, call (256) 773-2533 or (256) 773-2588.

**SMELL GAS? ACT FAST!**

**256-773-2533 or 256-773-2588 or 911**

**Hartselle Utilities**

The Hartselle Connection is published quarterly by Hartselle Utilities.

1010 Sparkman St NW  
 Hartselle, AL 35640  
 256-773-3340  
[HartselleUtilities.org](http://HartselleUtilities.org)