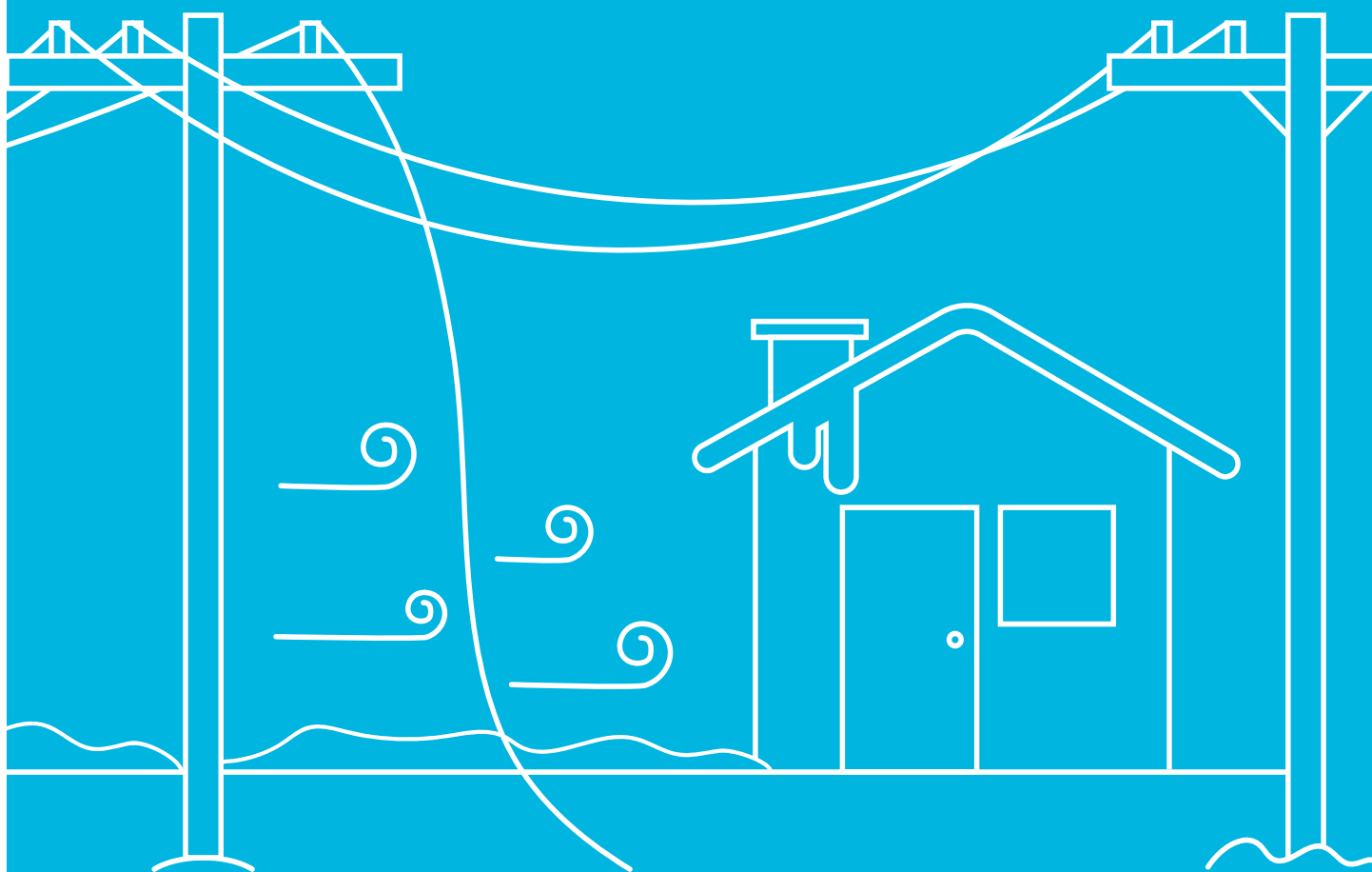


Storms actually:

How BC Hydro is preparing for increasing holiday storms.



Storms actually: How BC Hydro is preparing for increasing holiday storms

New data shows, over the past five years storms during the ‘holiday season’ timeframe of mid-December to mid-January are steadily getting stronger and more frequent in B.C., mostly because of the changing climate. In fact, BC Hydro has experienced at least one storm causing damage to its system almost every year during the holiday season for the past decade, with more severe storms just in the past five holiday seasons. With the likelihood of holiday storms higher this year, BC Hydro has been preparing, and is encouraging customers to get prepared too.

Highlights

- New BC Hydro data shows in the past five years the average number of customers affected by a winter holiday storm has risen over 500% compared to the previous five years.
- In fact, a recent survey conducted on behalf of BC Hydro finds nearly 90% of British Columbians have experienced at least one weather-related power outage over the winter holiday season in recent years – almost half of those in just the last two years.
 - In 2022, an early January snowstorm left about 180,000 customers without power in the Lower Mainland and parts of Vancouver Island and the year before a mid-January snowstorm affected 220,000 customers.
 - In 2018, BC Hydro experienced the most damaging windstorm in its history right before Christmas impacting 750,000 customers – 75 per cent were restored in the first 24 hours.
 - In 2017, BC Hydro experienced an ice storm impacting over 150,000 customers in the Lower Mainland.
- Of those who have experienced a holiday season power outage, 20% said it changed their holiday plans.
- Yet, despite some changes in plans, most British Columbians did not let the storm-related power outage put a damper on their holiday celebrations.
- Even though many noted that the outage occurred while they were cooking a big holiday meal, only 1% said it truly ruined their plans.
- Interestingly, nearly 60% said they want to see snow fall over the holiday season this year – even with the possibility of disrupted celebrations.
- As BC Hydro continues to experience more weather-related system damage, it is more important than ever that customers be prepared for the possibility of holiday power outages – the majority of which are caused by trees and adverse weather.
- As for snow, it can be nice to look at, but snow and ice can also weigh down trees and branches, which can lead to them falling into BC Hydro electrical lines or equipment.

Solutions

BC Hydro is preparing to respond quickly to power outages caused by adverse weather this holiday season, and is taking the following steps:

- Increasing staffing and line crews on standby during the holidays to restore power as quickly as possible should the lights go out.
- Stepping up vegetation management work year-round to identify problem areas and removing vegetation that has grown too close to power lines or electrical equipment.
- Increasing stock of spare equipment and materials. Supply chain disruptions have reinforced the importance of establishing a healthy level of redundancy in our materials management.

CUSTOMERS CAN PREPARE FOR POTENTIAL OUTAGES BY:

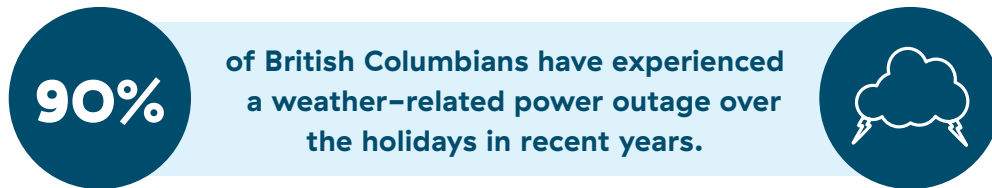
- Having a well-stocked emergency kit with supplies for each member of the household for at least 72 hours.
- Developing a preparedness plan and sharing it with everyone in your home.
- Checking emergency equipment periodically (flashlights, radios, generators, etc.) to make sure they are in working order.
- Using surge protectors to protect your electronic devices such as computers, printers, and televisions.
- Developing a list of important local telephone numbers. Include numbers for police, fire, poison control centre and include us to report an outage: **1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376)**.

Holiday season storms

Extreme weather caused by climate change is having year-round effects in British Columbia. While traditional storm season (November to March) still exists, it is becoming more probable for storms to happen any time of year. However, the holiday season can be especially challenging as colder weather often brings snow, ice and high winds that can lead to more power outages.

New BC Hydro data shows in the past five years the average number of customers affected by a winter holiday storm has risen over 500% compared to the previous five years. In fact, a recent survey conducted on behalf of BC Hydro finds nearly 90% of British Columbians have experienced at least one weather-related power outage over the winter holiday season in recent years – almost half of those in just the last two years.

This report will look at the frequency of holiday season storms (mid-December to mid-January), and explain how BC Hydro is preparing to respond, and how customers can prepare too.



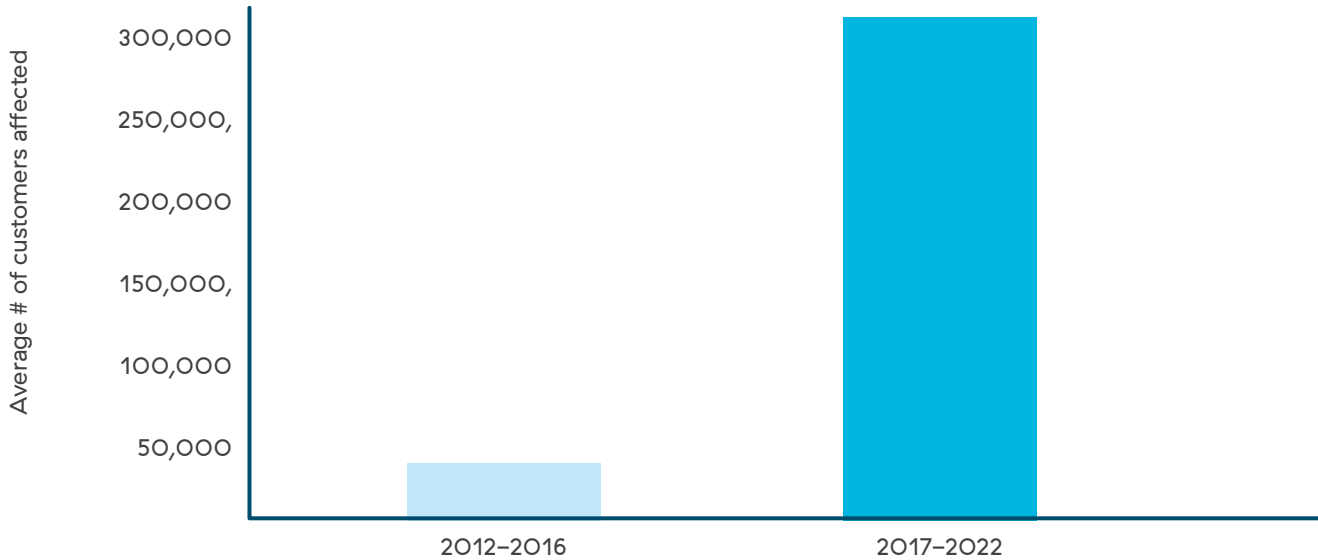
Holly, jolly, stormy

BC Hydro data shows storms during the holiday season are becoming more frequent, and affecting more BC Hydro customers, especially over the past five years. From 2012 to 2016, the average number of customers affected by a holiday storm was over 45,000, but in the past five years from 2017 to 2022 the average number of customers affected rose to over 300,000 – an increase of over 500%.

From 2012 to 2016 there were a handful of smaller scale holiday storms, the largest of which was a snowstorm in December 2016 affecting over 60,000 customers in mostly the Lower Mainland. Beginning in 2017 storm events picked up, with a strong holiday ice storm in 2017 that left over 150,000 customers without power in the Lower Mainland just before New Year's Eve. From there, the frequency and severity of holiday storms has picked up. In fact, the past three years in a row B.C. has experienced a major storm during the holiday season, each one impacting around 200,000 BC Hydro customers.

Over half of all power outages in B.C. are caused by adverse weather and trees or branches contacting power lines or electrical equipment. The winter can be challenging as heavy snow and ice can weigh down tree branches, causing them to fall into electrical lines or equipment. High winds can also knock down vegetation and trees, causing outages. In fact, the most damaging storm in BC Hydro's history was a windstorm that happened just before Christmas in 2018. It impacted over 750,000 customers across the province. The storm was so damaging because winds came from three different directions, topping 100 km per hour in some areas. Also, more than 400 millimetres of rain fell in some areas in the week before the storm, weakening soil and destabilizing trees.

SEVERITY OF STORMS ON BC HYDRO SYSTEM



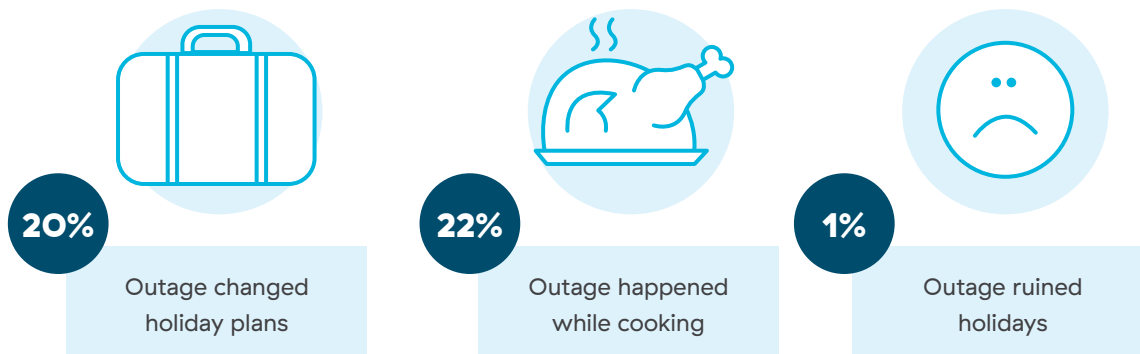
Holiday disruptions

With holiday outages becoming more likely, it is not surprising that 90% of British Columbians have experienced at least one weather-related power outage over the winter holiday season in recent years – almost half of those in just the last two years. Of those who have experienced a winter holiday power outage, 20% said it changed their holiday plans, with those living on Vancouver Island the most likely to have had to make a change.

When it comes to holiday festivities such as dinners and parties, 36% said a power outage had some, but not much impact on their celebrations, and even though many (22%) noted that the outage occurred while they were cooking a big holiday meal, only 1% said it truly ruined their plans. Vancouver Islanders were again the most likely to have experienced a cooking disruption (26%), followed by those in the Southern Interior (23%).

However, even with the possibility of a disrupted holiday, almost 60% said they want to see snow fall over the winter holidays.

HOLIDAY OUTAGE STATS



Solutions

As BC Hydro continues to experience more weather-related system damage, it is more important than ever that customers be prepared for the possibility of holiday power outages – the majority of which are caused by trees and adverse weather. As for snow, it can be nice to look at, but snow and ice can also weigh down trees and branches, which can lead to them falling into BC Hydro electrical lines or equipment.

One of the ways BC Hydro is preparing this holiday season is by increasing staffing and the number of BC Hydro and contractor line crews on standby during the holidays to restore power as quickly as possible should the lights go out.

BC Hydro is also stepping up vegetation management work year-round to identify problem areas and removing vegetation that has grown too close to power lines or electrical equipment.

BC Hydro has also increased its stock of spare equipment and materials. Supply chain disruptions have reinforced the importance of establishing a healthy level of redundancy in our materials management. This is particularly important over the holiday season with shipping delays and some business closures.

Customers should also be prepared for potential holiday season outages by organizing a well-stocked emergency kit with supplies for each member of the household for at least 72 hours. It is also important to develop a preparedness plan to share with everyone in your home and develop a list of important local telephone numbers. Include numbers for police, fire, poison control centre and include us to report an outage: **1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376)**.

To check the status of an outage, visit [bchydro.com/outages](https://www.bchydro.com/outages).

