



Austin Utilities Emergency Load Shedding Plan | Austin Minnesota

Executive Summary

In April 2022, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) that operates the electric grid in much of the upper Midwest announced a potential strain on the electric grid that could lead to emergency electric curtailments. Our wholesale electric provider, Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA), will be expected to participate in emergency electric curtailments and is assisting their members in developing a plan to curtail load. Failure to do so can result in a cascading failure of the electrical grid which potentially damages equipment and can take days or weeks to fully restore electric service.

In the event an emergency is called, Austin Utilities intends to meet the required load reduction in three steps. Electric curtailments will be a final step in the event load curtailment cannot be met by other means. Efforts have been made to implement a plan that will have the least impact on the community.

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) has the authority to order emergency actions.

NERC Emergency Action Sequence Step 1 - Notification of declaration and request preparation and standby for further instructions.

- AU sends internal email to key staff to standby for response.
- Public notified through media notice asking customers to conserve energy.

NERC Emergency Action Sequence Step 2 - Notification of emergency conservation actions for public appeal, energy management programs, utility load shedding programs.

- AU initiates non-emergency Energy Management Program that includes air conditioning load management, startup of AU and customer contracted generators.
- AU sends notice to Key Account customers who have made commitments to respond by curtailing non-essential load.

NERC Emergency Action Sequence Step 3 - Notification to implement manual load shedding program; Notice of Rolling Blackouts.

- AU sends internal email to key staff to prepare for rolling blackouts.
- AU contacts Mower County emergency management/ LEC dispatch and notifies them of impending rolling blackouts.
- AU sends media notice to notify the public of impending rolling blackouts.
- AU will start blackout process to meet MISO/SMMPA curtailment request.

The Electric Emergency Energy Plan FAQ provides answers to additional questions.