

The Top 10 Most Significant U.S. Blackouts of 2017

1. Hurricane havoc. Making landfall on Sept. 11, the devastating storm deemed Hurricane Irma caused widespread and catastrophic damage, including cutting power to more than 15 million customers throughout Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina. Across Florida, the Category 5 hurricane spared most houses and lives, but had less mercy on the power grid. A week and a half later, electricity had been restored to 99 percent of customers.
2. Halloween trick. A powerful storm that pounded the Northeast on Oct. 29 left more than 1.5 million customers in the dark throughout Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts — some for up to 3 days! The lengthy blackout prompted many communities to cancel trick-or-treating activities, as utility companies brought in crews from other East Coast states to help restore electricity faster.
3. One for the record books. Deemed the largest weather event in the history of Michigan's DTE utility, gusts topping 60 mph hammered the southeast portion of the state March 8, cutting power to more than 1 million customers. The high winds pulled down more than 4,000 power lines in the record-breaking outage.
4. Horrific Harvey. Nearly 300,000 people were left without power August 26 after Hurricane Harvey smashed into Texas, bringing prolonged rainfall that caused catastrophic flooding. The storm made landfall near Corpus Christi as a Category 4 event, with maximum sustained winds of 130 mph.
5. Adding — make that subtracting — fuel to the fire. A raging wildfire in Sonoma County, Calif., led Cal Fire to ask the utility to shut off electricity to 279,000 customers Oct. 11. Firefighters requested that power lines be de-energized so they wouldn't have to worry about live lines overhead. The blackouts impacted the Sonoma, Santa Rosa and Napa areas.
6. Bridging the (power) gap. A bridge-building mishap on July 27 resulted in an 8-day-long outage on North Carolina's Hatteras and Ocracoke islands. While working on the new Bonner Bridge, a construction crew drove a steel casing into an electric transmission cable, inadvertently cutting off power to 9,000 homes and businesses. The major blackout completely shut down the tourist haven, prompting the governor to declare a state of emergency.
7. Snowed under. The Atlanta area was left to dig out of more than a foot of snow after a massive storm plowed through the area Dec. 8, resulting in 365,000 utility customers losing power.
8. Walking in (a darkened) Memphis. Memphis Light, Gas & Water predicted it would take more than a week to restore service to the 10,080 customers who lost power May 27 when severe storms pounded the region. It was the third largest outage in the city's history, surpassed only by a 1994 ice storm and Hurricane Elvis in 2003.
9. Wicked windstorm. More than 200,000 Portland, Ore., area residents were left in the dark after a windstorm — the strongest on record for the month of April since 1957 — pummeled power lines. With gusts up to 73 mph, the storm was responsible for at least two deaths in the region.
10. Taken by storm. Some 76,000 customers in the Omaha area were left in the dark June 16 when severe weather cut power. Utility crews had to work 16-hour shifts around the clock to restore electricity, with some customers having to wait a full week to get power back!