

# Somerset County Emergency Operations Plan

## ATTACHMENT H - UTILITY FAILURES

### I. NATURE OF THE HAZARD

A major region-wide electrical utility failure can occur as a result of a severe winter or summer storm, a major transmission line failure, a region-wide system failure, or as an act of sabotage by cyber or conventional terrorists.

Maine experienced a nearly state-wide electrical utility failure in January 1998 that lasted in some areas up to two weeks and was caused by a severe three-day ice storm. The majority of the \$ 963,775.00 in damages in Somerset County was to the electrical transmission line system.

When there is a region-wide power outage, nearly all activities come to a halt. Most residents, who are on individual wells, are unable to pump water for drinking, food preparation, or sanitary purposes. They are unable to freeze or cook food, heat their homes, watch TV or listen to the radio for emergency information, or wash clothes. These problems are aggravated during the winter months. Business and industry are unable to complete any business. Financial transactions are halted. Daily life and business ceases to function when there is no electrical power.

Although considered and discussed, utility failures were not rated and profiled in the Somerset County All-Hazard Mitigation Plan.

### II. RISK AREA

The entire County and State are susceptible to major electrical utility failures. Special needs populations, the poor, the unprepared, and businesses are most at risk. Risk is reduced by those individuals, organizations, and businesses that maintain localized back up power capabilities such as batteries or generators.

### III. DIRECTION AND CONTROL

Each municipality will be responsible for conducting damage assessment in their communities and reporting this information to the Somerset County EOC. The County EOC will consolidate the reports and transmit this information to the State EOC.

The responsibility for electrical utility transmission line maintenance, repair, construction, and operations is with Central Maine Power and Madison Electric Power Company. Contact will be maintained between the Somerset County EOC and Central Maine Power and Madison Electric during the entire utility failure event period. Municipalities requesting information should direct their requests to the County EOC.

### IV. COMMUNICATIONS

Communications will be maintained between the Somerset County RCC, the Somerset County EMA office, the first responders and the municipal officers. A major utility failure could affect telephone, cell phone and radio transmission capabilities. Communications may need to be completed by HAM radios or by couriers.

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### V. WARNING

An electrical utility failure will most likely occur without any warning. Bangor-Hydro maintains a information contact telephone number for the general public to call to learn more about the outage; its probable duration and the effected areas.

### VI. EMERGENCY PUBLIC INFORMATION

Because a Maine winter storm typically affects a large section of the state, the Maine Emergency Management Agency and the two Maine-based National Weather Service Stations will contact local radio and television stations to notify the public of the expected severity and conditions of the winter storm, instructions on how to prepare for storm and the status of road closures.

### VII. EVACUATION

Evacuations are not expected to occur as a result of an electrical utility failure. Individuals may need to relocate from their homes if they lose power and have no backup heat source. A nursing home or an elderly resident may need assistance from the Somerset County EMA or American Red Cross in order to evacuate to other facilities. This limited individual evacuation will not cause traffic congestion anywhere in the County.

### VIII. MASS CARE

Shelters may need to be opened to provide heated shelter or eating stations for those affected by the utility failure. These cases of sheltering will be managed by the Mid-Maine Chapter of the American Red Cross in Waterville. If the numbers are limited, these people may be sheltered in area commercial lodging. If the numbers are sufficiently high, then mass care facilities will be established outside the danger areas.

### IX. HEALTH AND MEDICAL

The Somerset County EOC will contact the local hospital to determine their status and capabilities to operate during an extended utility failure.

### X. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Municipalities will contact the County EMA office when requesting resources.