

Winter Storm Uri Update
Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, Federal Communications Commission
February 18, 2021

The Federal Communications Commission continues to coordinate with FEMA and CISA on any information or regulatory needs in support of winter storm response initiatives. Winter Storm Uri had significant impacts on power grids across the U.S. midwest and southeast, causing widespread power outages that have affected communications services, resulting in reliance on generator power.

Texas and Oklahoma have declared states of emergency and have activated emergency support function (ESF) #2 (Communications) at the state level. President Biden approved Texas' request for disaster assistance on February 14th and Oklahoma's request on February 18th. These major disaster declarations enable the use of Stafford Act funds and the activation of ESFs which enable federal support to state, local, tribal, and territorial response efforts. Currently ESF #2 has been activated in Texas and Oklahoma.

Texas state officials report that the communications industry is doing a great job of coordinating and sharing information. Neither FEMA nor the impacted states have requested activation of the Disaster Information Reporting System (DIRS), but the FCC continues to monitor the situation and stands ready to assist if needed.

The interdependencies between power and communications service remain a challenge as persisting power outages and rolling brownouts force communications service providers to rely on backup power. Regions impacted by the winter storms have requested fuel distribution support from FEMA and CISA and state emergency management officials. Not only are icy roads continuing to hamper fuel distribution, but freezing temperatures are also causing fuel in the impacted areas to gelatinate. While FEMA works with states to develop a fuel plan, the FCC continues to coordinate with regional and state officials to identify priority communications sites.

The following is a snapshot of the status of communications services in Texas and Oklahoma. This report incorporates network outage data submitted by communications providers to the FCC's Network Outage Reporting System (NORS). Note that the operational status of communications services during a disaster may evolve rapidly. The FCC will continue to monitor the situation and work with government partners to support restoration efforts.

As of February 18, 2021, at 9:30 AM EST, the FCC has received the following reports about the storm:

	Number of Outage Reports	Wireless Users Affected	Wireline Users Affected	VoIP Users Affected	OC3 Affected
OKLAHOMA	8	24,172	270	0	7
TEXAS	208	369,918	34,868	721,873	11,227
Grand Total	216	394,090	35,138	721,873	11,234