

Emergency Response

How emergency services and providers get your community back online



Emergency Help Guide

What happens when the power and connectivity go out?

In a natural disaster, when the power goes out, so does connectivity. Losing the ability to communicate with the outside world can feel isolating and unsettling. However, government agencies, emergency services, and relevant experts are prepared to respond and will work towards restoring services as swiftly as possible. The response process and priorities may vary between regions, but all efforts aim to reconnect communities as soon as feasible. Knowing this can be very reassuring in these circumstances. Here's an outline of the general approach:

1. Immediate Emergency Response

State Emergency Services (SES) work with local emergency teams to prioritise public safety through evacuations, rescue operations, and securing effected areas.

Local Government coordinates disaster response and relief efforts, working closely with state and federal bodies.

This information is then used to inform energy providers and telecommunication providers to prepare for deployment for service restoration.

2. Damage Assessment

SES, local councils, energy, and telecommunications providers assess the damage to infrastructure such as power lines, mobile towers, and NBN equipment.

Critical sites like hospitals and evacuation centres are identified for priority restoration.

3. Coordination of Stakeholders

Federal and State Governments oversee recovery efforts, working with energy providers, NBN Co, and Telecommunications Providers (Telstra, Optus, etc.) to restore services.



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Telstra Global Operations Centre

4. Power Restoration

Telecommunications services may be offline during or following emergencies or natural disasters for a number of reasons. Often the primary cause is a loss of mains power and depletion of reserve power supplies, for example back up batteries at towers etc. Energy providers prioritise critical infrastructure, deploying crews to restore power to affected areas. Backup generators are provided to essential services if necessary.

5. Telecommunications Restoration

Telecommunication companies (Telcos) may deploy temporary facilities to restore services after disasters. While these have limited capacity compared to permanent setups, they support Emergency Service Organisations (ESOs) and communities when primary infrastructure is down. Deployment of temporary facilities depends on the incident type, location needs, and availability. Telcos can only access affected areas once ESOs confirm it's safe. Restoring permanent facilities or setting up temporary ones can be quick but may sometimes take up to a week, depending on damage severity.

Key Takeaways

- State Emergency Services (SES) coordinate with local teams to ensure public safety, conduct evacuations, and secure affected areas, with support from local and federal government agencies.
- Damage to infrastructure, including power lines, mobile towers, and NBN equipment, is assessed by SES, councils, and service providers, prioritising critical sites like hospitals and evacuation centres for restoration.
- Federal and State Governments, and Agencies collaborate with energy and telecommunication providers to restore services, focusing first on critical infrastructure and providing regular public updates through emergency channels.

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