

Federal Communications Commission Open Meeting on Oct. 26

Comments from Louie Dabdoub – Entergy, Director of Incident Response

- Safety for our personnel supporting restoration efforts is of the utmost importance. And this extends to other critical infrastructure restoration workers, first responders, and the many others that take part in bringing communities back following a major storm.
- Following last year's active hurricane season, we recognized an opportunity for improved collaboration with telecommunications companies around hurricane planning and restoration to minimize the potential for loss of communications.
- We understand when fiber-optic lines are severed, a loss of communications can result. And we understand by better coordinating with telecommunications companies that are also conducting restoration work, together we can help support one another in the effort.
- Entergy is also an electric power industry participant in the Cross Sector Resilience Forum which was created in 2020—in partnership with the major communications industry associations, like CTIA—to identify opportunities needed to enhance communication and coordination between the communication and electric sectors before, during and after a disaster.
- Entergy has taken proactive steps to refine its restoration efforts from previous storms, in this regard, that continue to evolve and improve today.
 - Following the 2020 hurricane season, we began working alongside the Edison Electric Institute to align with their other member utilities who may have also shared similar restoration challenges; and developed a unified plan of action. This has proved to be a highly valuable exercise.
 - We adapted our storm response plan to better align personnel and reinforce training:
 - A designated group – the *Communication Deputy Section* – was established, charged with planning and coordinating with a number of telecommunications companies prior to, during and following a storm.
 - Leading up to the 2021 hurricane season, we incorporated this topic, along with personnel with new responsibilities, into our annual storm drills – emphasizing the importance of maintaining the integrity of telecommunications equipment in the field.
 - The new section was activated during the 2021 hurricane season, including our response to Hurricane Ida.
 - Representatives from telecommunications companies took part alongside our teams during restoration efforts in the field and during planning meetings.
 - Company and contracted crews, as part of their onboarding, were trained to not inadvertently cut any fiber-optic wires without proper notification, barring an emergency.
 - This training was reinforced during crew briefings as restoration personnel deployed into the field to restore power.
 - Coaching was an ongoing action we took, as needed.
 - In the field, to help reduce the risk of cutting into telecommunications cables underground we used hydrovac systems wherever possible to set new poles instead of an auger.
 - This process significantly reduces the likelihood of damaging those essential pieces of telecommunications infrastructure.
- We acknowledge this is an important and continuous endeavor and stand committed to working with other critical infrastructure restoration workers, such as telecommunications companies, within our storm-impacted areas.
- As mentioned, this collaboration has proven to be valuable. We've made significant improvements over previous hurricane seasons to strengthen this part of our restoration work.
- Thank you for your time today.

###