

[Canadian Niagara Power- Eastern Ontario Power] – Major Event Report

[March 30th 2025]

Introduction

Eastern Ontario Power (“EOP”) is a division of Canadian Niagara Power Inc. (“CNPI”), which is a Licenced Distribution Company (“LDC”) licenced by the OEB. CNPI is headquartered in Fort Erie, Ontario and supplies customers in Fort Erie, Port Colborne and Gananoque. In Gananoque, CNPI operates under the brand/division name EOP, and EOP supplies electricity to approximately 3,600 customers of CNPI’s total 31,200 customers.

Late on March 28th, freezing rain began in the Gananoque area and continued for an extended period until early March 31st. The intensity of the freezing rain peaked on March 30th, with 12.2 mm of precipitation, following a total of 14.7 mm over the previous two days. The accumulation from the preceding days, combined with the heavy precipitation on March 30th, led to significant ice buildup on power lines and tree branches. Additionally, moderate winds with gusts reaching up to 61 km/h contributed to the situation. The combination of ice accumulation and wind resulted in numerous branches falling onto EOP’s infrastructure on March 30th, causing power interruptions for a total of 2,002 customers. The customer hours of interruption during March 30th were 11,250.

The customer hours of interruption experienced on March 30 in EOP exceeded the IEEE Major Event Day threshold for all of CNPI.

Prior to the Major Event

1. Did the distributor have any prior warning that the Major Event would occur?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Additional Comments:

Yes, Environment Canada issued a weather alert for the Gananoque area, warning of a prolonged period of freezing rain and significant ice accretion. The alert indicated that the weather would take effect from the evening of March 28th until the afternoon of March 30th.

2. If the distributor did have prior warning, did the distributor arrange to have extra employees on duty or on standby prior to the Major Event beginning?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Brief description of arrangements, or explain why extra employees were not arranged:

Yes, crews were put on standby prior to the beginning of the Major Event. In addition, two crews from another division of Canadian Niagara Power located in Fort Erie, arrived in the Gananoque area prior to the weather event to proactively assist the local crew. A contracted crew from a non-distributor organization was also on standby, ready to deploy if needed.

3. *If the distributor did have prior warning, did the distributor issue any media announcements to the public warning of possible outages resulting from the pending Major Event?*

☒ Yes ☐ No

Customers were given prior warning that the forecasted weather could result in outages. This communication was delivered by updating the Customer News section on Eastern Ontario Power's website and posting on Facebook and X about the forecasted weather and its potential impact on our services.

4. *Did the distributor train its staff on the response plans for this type of a Major Event?*

☒ Yes ☐ No

Yes, communication with employees was completed prior to the storm's arrival. Staff availability and the support available from outside the organization were discussed and confirmed. In addition, employees were advised to fuel their vehicles ahead of the storm to avoid delays during the event.

CNPI (EOP division) has a Business Continuity Plan. The plan is designed to assist in the response to natural disasters, accidents, major outages, environmental disasters, municipal emergencies and cyber-attacks. For major outages, this plan covers responsibilities and procedures for all outage restoration and communication efforts, consolidates contact information for internal staff and key external agencies.

In addition to the Business Continuity Plan, an internal document outlines roles and responsibilities during a major event. This document is a living document that focuses on directing current assignments for roles and responsibilities during Major Outages that the management team can follow on a daily basis during a major outage.

During the Major Event

1. *Please identify the main contributing Cause of the Major Event as per the table in section 2.1.4.2.5 of the Electricity Reporting and Record Keeping Requirements.*

☐ Loss of Supply

- ☐ Lightning
- ☐ Adverse Weather-Wind
- ☐ Adverse Weather-Snow
- ☒ Adverse Weather-Freezing rain/Ice storm
- ☐ Adverse Environment-Fire
- ☐ Adverse Environment-Flooding
- ☐ Other

Please provide a brief description of the event (i.e. what happened?).

An accumulation of approximately 27 mm of ice formed on power lines and branches, with wind gusts reaching up to 61 km/h on March 30th. Trees and branches fell onto our infrastructure, causing broken lines, arcing, and lockouts.

If selected "Other", please explain:

2. Was the IEEE Standard 1366 used to derive the threshold of the Major Event?

- ☒ Yes, used IEEE Standard 1366*
- ☐ No, used IEEE Standard 1366 2-day rolling average
- ☐ No, used fixed percentage (i.e., 10% of customers affected)

*The OEB preferred option

3. When did the Major Event begin (date and time)?

The first outage caused by the freezing rain occurred at 2:51 a.m. on March 29th; however, the threshold for a major event was not surpassed until March 30th, after many hours of prolonged ice accumulation. The first outage on March 30th occurred at 1:08 a.m.

Did the distributor issue any information about this Major Event, such as estimated times of restoration, to the public during the Major Event?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please provide a brief description of the information. If no, please explain:

Eastern Ontario Power posted an estimated restoration time for its largest outage event on Facebook and X on March 30th. This outage event accounted for 1,707 of the customers interrupted that day. The estimated restoration time was within 20 minutes of the actual restoration. Once power was restored, communications were sent out via Facebook and X, advising customers to contact us if their power was still out. An additional communication was released to inform customers that power had been fully restored, except for a few isolated incidents involving downed trees.

4. How many customers were interrupted during the Major Event?

2002 customers were interrupted during March 30th. There was freezing rain during the prior day March 29th too, on that day 2131 customers were interrupted; however, for a shorter duration which did not hit the major event day threshold.

What percentage of the distributor's total customer base did the interrupted customers represent?

For all the customers of Canadian Niagara Power: 6%

For the division Eastern Ontario Power: 55%

5. How many hours did it take to restore 90% of the customers who were interrupted?

It took 8 hours to restore 90% of the customers.

Additional Comments:

6. Were there any outages associated with Loss of Supply during the Major Event?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, please report on the duration and frequency of the Loss of Supply outages:

7. In responding to the Major Event, did the distributor utilize assistance through a third party mutual assistance agreement with other utilities?

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Do not have third party mutual assistance agreements with other utilities

If yes, please provide the name of the utilities who provided assistance:

8. Did the distributor run out of any needed equipment or materials during the Major Event?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, please describe the shortages: _____

After the Major Event

1. What actions, if any, will be taken to be prepared for, or mitigate, such Major Events in the future?

- ☐ No further action is required at this time
- ☐ Additional staff training
- ☐ Process improvements
- ☐ System upgrades
- ☒ Other

Additional comments:

Continuous process improvements are always a priority. Feedback from both our team and our customers is essential to enhancing our reliability. During and after the major event, we received numerous positive feedback from customers, which was reassuring and indicated satisfaction with our communication and restoration processes. Other key stakeholders, such as the Town of Gananoque and the Gananoque Fire Service, also expressed their appreciation and provided positive feedback regarding the distributor's efforts during the storm.

Appendix A : March 28th Weather Alert Gananoque Source Environment Canada

Weather Alerts for: Gananoque - Mallorytown

Warnings

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11:50 AM EDT Friday 28 March 2025

Freezing Rain Warning in effect for:

- Gananoque - Mallorytown

Major ice storm this weekend.

What:

Prolonged period of freezing rain.

Significant ice accretion. General ice accretion amounts of 10 to 20 mm, with amounts in excess of 25 mm possible.

Widespread power outages.

Icy and slippery conditions.

Significant precipitation possible which may lead to localized flooding.

When:

This evening into Sunday afternoon.

The heaviest freezing rain is expected overnight into Saturday morning.

Additional Information:

The area will receive significant freezing rain over the upcoming weekend. Precipitation may begin as snow or rain before changing over to freezing rain this evening. Freezing rain may become lighter for a brief period of time for some areas on Saturday. Freezing rain will change to rain on Sunday as temperatures rise above the freezing mark.

