



MEDIA RELEASE

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Kalamazoo County shares recovery update following Severe Weather/Ice Storm, local state of emergency

KALAMAZOO, Mich. – As recovery and restoration efforts continue following this week’s extreme weather, Kalamazoo County recognizes the need to keep our citizens aware of the current state of our community and potential safety concerns.

During this afternoon’s Virtual Emergency Operations Center meeting, the Kalamazoo County Office of Emergency Management announced the adoption of the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Community Lifelines, which uses a standard "traffic light protocol" (Red, Amber, Green) to convey the status of essential services.

As of 4 p.m., only transportation and energy were classified as “Amber,” while law enforcement/security, fire services, communications, health and medical, and food, water and shelter all remain “Green” indicating normal operations.

The Kalamazoo County Community Lifelines will be regularly updated and can be found on the Office of Emergency Management’s [Facebook page](#).

Consumers Energy briefed officials that Kalamazoo County is down to 29.1% of customers – or 34,895 households – without power. Consumers has activated every line worker in Michigan and estimates most County residents will see restoration of power by Sunday.

The Road Commission of Kalamazoo County said [in a news release](#) this evening that most trees have been cleared from the roads – leaving only trees touching live wire. Once Consumers Energy eliminates the danger of those downed power lines, the RCKC will finish safely clearing the roads of all remaining trees.

Kalamazoo County Board of Commissions John Taylor urges the public to please be compassionate to one another as we get through this difficult time.

“Thank the emergency responders and crews of contractors from all over the Midwest to help us to restore power to those that need it. We ask that you check in on loved ones and that the Kalamazoo community continue to do what it does best and take care of one another.”

PUBLIC HEALTH REMINDERS

During a power outage, food safety may be compromised.

Potentially hazardous foods are anything that require temperature control, such as raw meats, dairy, or cooked foods. The Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department recommends the following:

- Leave refrigerators closed as long as possible to prevent cold air from escaping during short outages.
- After a power outage, throw out perishable foods that were in your refrigerator after 4 hours, in a half-full freezer for 24 hours, or a full freezer for 48 hours.
- Never taste food to determine its safety after a power outage.
- “When in doubt, throw it out.”
- More information on food safety: <http://bit.ly/3m0wVbs>

Generator safety is also a serious concern during an emergency.

Remember to never use a portable generator inside your home or garage, even if the doors and windows are open—due to the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Please follow these guidelines when using a generator:

- Only use generators outdoors, more than 20 feet away from your home, doors, and windows.
- Do not use a generator in an open garage or carport.
- Do NOT use a generator without first checking that battery-powered CO detectors are properly functioning in your home.
- More information on generator safety: <http://bit.ly/3IOIZFN>

Warming Shelters are available to those who need them.

The Red Cross is operating a 24-hour shelter at the Douglass Community Association located at 1000 W. Paterson St. in Kalamazoo. The resource is going largely untapped by the community, but is available as a source of food, water, warmth, and comfort.

Day warming centers are also available at:

- The River Church – located at 517 Walbridge St., open Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- The Salvation Army – located at 1700 S. Burdick St., open Tuesday and Friday from noon to 5 p.m.

For information on warming shelter locations and availability within Kalamazoo County, contact Gryphon Place 211 or visit <https://www.gryphon.org/211>.

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