

NHPUC December 2008 Ice Storm Review  
Hollis Telephone Company  
Kearsarge Telephone Company  
Merrimack County Telephone Company  
Wilton Telephone Company  
Set 1  
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March 20, 2009

STAFF 1-2: How often does your company update its emergency management plans?

Response:

The company updates its Field Services Disaster Recovery Plan annually or after each disaster event.

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STAFF 1-3: Please provide the process that is used to update your emergency management plan.

Response:

The Field Services Disaster Recovery Plan is reviewed on an annual basis, as well as critiqued each time the plan is utilized.

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STAFF 1-4: Who participates in the development of your emergency management plan? Please include details on the approval process.

Response:

The emergency management plan is created by cross functional teams representing all groups responsible for service monitoring, restoration, and customer support. This would include Field Services, Service Centers, Network Management Operations and Technical Customer Operations. As described in Staff 1-2 and 1-3, the Plan is updated annually and when lessons are learned during each disaster recovery effort.

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STAFF 1-5: Does your company subscribe to any professional weather forecasting services?

- a. If yes, please provide the name or names of the company or companies.
- b. Please also provide how long your company has subscribed to the service.
- c. Please provide a description of the services provided to your company.
- d. If not, please explain why.

Response:

TDS monitors weather through normal, commonly available weather channels.

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STAFF 1-6: Please describe the process used to alert personnel within your company about the possibility of the December 2008 ice storm.

Response:

Communication within the companies included email, Network Service departmental meetings and conference calls.

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STAFF 1-7: Please describe in detail the process used to determine the resource needs of your company for a major restoration event.

Response:

Field Services Managers review the issues involved in the restoration and compare the number of local forces available with the work efforts required. Additional assistance, if needed, is requested from other TDS companies including companies in other states, as well as available contractors.

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STAFF 1-8: Please describe the activation process of command centers, work centers, staging sites and call centers. Please indicate the timeframe of the activation in relation to anticipated impact of the December 2008 storm.

Response:

Local command centers were established in Contoocook, New London and Wilton for the coordination of crews, communication with fire, police and road agents, generator placement and fueling and coordination with headquarters in Madison. Recovery calls between the local sites, Network Management Operations, call centers, and Field Services occurred three times daily throughout the restoration efforts.

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STAFF 1-9: Was an emergency call center set up specifically to respond to service outages due to the December 2008 ice storm?

Response:

Procedures were instituted in our existing call centers specific to the New Hampshire outage. Special call scripts were updated periodically to communicate to our customers as call center staff learned of conditions occurring in the field. Special trouble ticket procedures were developed to aid technicians in determining the scope of repairs, where access to streets and roads was available, and where the power company had completed its work.

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STAFF 1-10: Please provide the process used to disseminate information to utility call center staff and any other utility staff responsible for responding to customer inquiries during an outage. Please include the frequency of the information updates and the age of the information provided in the updates.

Response:

Representatives of Field Services, Network Operations, Customer Operations and Government/Regulatory Affairs participated in conference calls three times per day with updates and minutes of each call distributed. Call scripts for customer communications were revised as necessary. Additional call prompts were instituted to aid customers when calling in repairs.

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STAFF 1-11: Please provide the trunking capacity of the call center or centers that handle customer calls. What level of staffing is normally maintained at those call centers and what level was maintained during the December 2008 ice storm? What call volume do these levels of staffing correspond to? What was the daily call volume for the period December 11 – December 31, 2008? How does that compare to normal call volumes?

Response:

Our call centers have a total of 529 inbound trunks. Adjustments to staffing for hours worked and shift changes are determined by the level of call volume. The table below indicates call volume for the month of December.

Date	Weekday	Offered calls	Average Speed of Answer		Date	Weekday	Offered calls	Average Speed of Answer
12/1/08	2	31	0:28		12/18/08	5	204	4:43
12/2/08	3	41	0:14		12/19/08	6	181	2:25
12/3/08	4	35	0:28		12/20/08	7	89	3:04
12/4/08	5	24	0:16		12/21/08	1	44	0:51
12/5/08	6	34	0:13		12/22/08	2	149	2:07
12/6/08	7	22	1:17		12/23/08	3	133	0:26
12/7/08	1	17	0:26		12/24/08	4	54	0:24
12/8/08	2	47	0:19		12/25/08	5	25	0:23
12/9/08	3	33	0:20		12/26/08	6	95	2:00
12/10/08	4	26	0:35		12/27/08	7	44	6:58
12/11/08	5	23	1:11		12/28/08	1	29	2:19
12/12/08	6	248	2:12		12/29/08	2	128	5:26
12/13/08	7	133	2:40		12/30/08	3	76	2:15
12/14/08	1	85	0:44		12/31/08	4	59	0:41
12/15/08	2	173	2:54					
12/16/08	3	143	0:55					
12/17/08	4	187	1:41					

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STAFF 1-12: How is automation used in your call answering system to provide information to customers during an outage? What percentage of customers selected the menu option of speaking to a representative during the December 2008 ice storm? How does that percentage compare to the percentage of customers selecting the option of speaking to a representative under business as usual conditions?

Response:

We placed prompts on all Interactive Voice Responses (IVRs) that New Hampshire customers would reach. We did not provide an automated method to generate a trouble ticket. When a customer called they would hear outage details for their area. All customers were then asked to stay on the call to report their trouble to a live agent. The percentage requested is not available.

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STAFF 1-13: Please describe the process for identifying and prioritizing service restoration to medical emergency customers as defined in Puc 1202.12.

Response:

All fire, police and hospital customers remained in service during the ice storm. We were notified by fire, police or emergency medical personnel as to customers with special needs. These customers were given priority restoration whenever possible.

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STAFF 1-14: Please identify all customer outreach and customer communications utilized during an outage to provide timely and responsive information to customers regarding the outage and projected restoration times.

Response:

IVR message change is done by call center managers to alert customers of situation, long hold times etc., when they call in for help.

Announcement for websites. Announcements are posted to [TDS.net](http://TDS.net) and [www.tdstelecom.com](http://www.tdstelecom.com) sites.

A splash page announcement for the home page.

Website updates to media page at [www.media.tdstelecom.com](http://www.media.tdstelecom.com); a direct online resource for customer information.

In some cases a direct response is mailed to a select group of impacted customers.

Note: Not all of these tools were utilized during the NH outage.

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STAFF 1-15: Please describe the training in-house employees receive concerning outages and restoration.

Response:

Field Services, Network Management and Customer Service employees are all trained in the provisioning of customer service in any circumstance including extreme safety precautions. In addition to normal ongoing training of personnel, additional processes are outlined in the Field Services Disaster Recovery Plan (See STAFF 1-1), the Step-by-Step Process for handling a natural disaster (simple outline of four stages of disaster and steps to be implemented—see attachment) and the Checklist for Natural Disaster (how trouble reports are handled in a disaster—see attachment).



Step-by-Step  
Process.pdf (23 K...



Checklist for  
Natural Disaster...

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STAFF 1-16: Please describe training requirements for contract employees and those used in mutual aid agreements (if different than those for in-house); include frequency, duration, location, written records and names of trainers.

Response:

The contract employees utilized in restorations are the same firms used in our day-to-day installations of cable, poles, equipment, etc. The same standards contained in our contracts with these firms are used in emergency restoration including quality and safety.

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STAFF 1-17: Please include a break-out of field personnel as well as support personnel, with responsibilities and duties for each in an outage and restoration scenario.

Response:

Government/Regulatory Affairs - Communicates with PUC/municipalities/customer education.

Field Services Support – Responsible for all outside plant repairs.

Engineering - Assessment of outside plant damage, outside plant engineering as required.

Field Services Management - All support functions including providing/coordinating additional personnel, materials, generators and fueling, alarm monitoring and ensuring safety procedures are strictly adhered to.

Network Management - Monitoring of all systems, switches, generators, carriers, etc.

Network Services – Responsible for overall management of the outage.

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STAFF 1-18: Please provide your company's definition of and job description for the following:

- a) line crew
- b) tree trimming crew
- c) bucket crew.

Response:

Our field personnel are cross trained in multiple disciplines including the use of bucket trucks, line work, etc. While we do some trimming, major trimming is contracted out to professional firms often in conjunction with power companies. See attached job descriptions of Field Services Technician–Network, Field Services Technician-Network Specialist and Sr. Field Services Technician–Network Specialist.



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(53 KB)



FST-Network  
Specialist.pdf (53...



Sr FST- Network  
Specialist.pdf...

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STAFF 1-19: Please provide the number of crews employed full-time by your company for each of the following years: 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008, differentiating numbers for internal and contract crews for each of the following:

- a) line crews
- b) tree trimming crews
- c) bucket crews.

Response:

These numbers represent internal personnel. (See STAFF 1-18.)

<b>Company</b>	<b>12/31/2004</b>	<b>12/31/2005</b>	<b>12/31/2006</b>	<b>12/31/2007</b>	<b>12/31/2008</b>
Hollis/Wilton	8	7	7	7	7
Kearsarge	11	11	10	8	8
Merrimack	20	22	17	17	16

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STAFF 1-20: Please provide a general description of the obligation of contract crews for storm restoration.

Response:

Contract crews receive direction from a designated TDS Field Services employee. As described in STAFF 1-16, these firms are the same firms under contract with TDS for day-to-day work and the same quality and safety standards apply.

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STAFF 1-21: Please provide any restrictions or enhancements from labor contracts that are included in restoration planning efforts.

Response:

The TDS Companies are not engaged in labor contracts.

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STAFF 1-22: Please provide the timeframe in which your company sought additional crews, if any, for the December 2008 ice storm. Please provide actual times and dates when you contacted outside crews, the names of the companies whose crews were contacted and the number and types of crews requested. Please also provide a description of the internal process and criteria by which those companies were chosen.

Response:

TDS brought in employees from TDS companies in Maine and Vermont, as well as other TDS NH crews who experienced less damage, or as their areas were cleared. In addition, contract crews were utilized through a Master Contract. A portion of the contract requires crews to assist us as needed in emergency situations. The number of crews required was assessed daily as roads were reopened and power was restored. Internal TDS meetings were held three times daily throughout the restoration to assess all needs, including manpower.

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STAFF 1-23: Please provide the timeframes in which mutual aid companies confirmed that crews were available and line crews actually began working in the field (include travel time, quartering time, training time and other time periods that are required before start time). Please provide breakdowns by company and crew.

Response:



STAFF 1-23  
ATTACHMENT C\_20090

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STAFF 1-24: Please provide the total number of crews available for each day of the December 2008 ice storm starting on December 11 and ending on the last day of restoration. Please provide them both in total for your company and by division and area work center. Please break out the crews by line service crews, bucket crews, tree trimming crews and other (describe). Please indicate whether the crews were the company's own crews, those of an affiliate or an outside contract crew.

Response:



STAFF 1-24  
ACHMENT D\_2009C

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STAFF 1-25: Please describe any communication and coordination efforts your company undertook with the electric utilities in your service areas in the wake of the ice storm.

Response:

Official communication with the power companies was limited other than communication in the field as roads were reopened and areas regained power.

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STAFF 1-26: Please describe any difficulties encountered in providing for hotel and meal accommodations for restoration workers when the public is competing for the same facilities due to power outages.

Response:

TDS personnel encountered no difficulties with hotel and meal accommodations.

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STAFF 1-27: Please describe methods used to keep crews fed during restoration efforts so as to maximize restoration work hours. Are box meals used for lunches, breakfasts and dinners in an effort to limit the travel time needed to go to area restaurants?

Response:

TDS personnel ate at local restaurants. Food was also provided at the work sites.

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STAFF 1-28: Please indicate when the company considers the last customer restored associated with the December 2008 ice storm.

Response:

January 3, 2009.

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STAFF 1-29: Please provide the number of damage assessment personnel used by your company during the December 2008 ice storm. Please provide their names and a description of their experience in assessing damage.

Response:

Damage assessment was performed by all of our Field Services employees, including technicians and managers. Outside Plant Engineering personnel assisted as needed. See employees listed in STAFF 1-23 and STAFF 1-24.

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STAFF 1-30: For any co-owned poles broken in your company's maintenance area as a result of the ice storm, please indicate when the pole was last inspected prior to the December 2008 storm and what, if any, maintenance was performed on it.

Response:

All broken poles were replaced by the power company with the exception of six poles replaced by contractors in the MCT serving area. Data as to the last inspection is not available. That information is generally tracked and handled by the power company for jointly owned poles.

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STAFF 1-31: Does the company have a system in place that tests lines to identify those lines that are out of service? If not, why not? Are there plans to implement such a system?

Response:

No. There are no plans at this time to implement such a system.

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STAFF 1-32: Please describe community and public relations efforts employed during the storm, including the number of people employed and the number of communities assigned to local governments.

Response:

There were no organized community or public relations efforts employed during the ice storm.

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STAFF 1-33: Please explain the process used to assign and deploy resources among affiliates across state lines for handling simultaneous outages in neighboring states. What processes are in place to ensure NH customers are receiving maximum resources, including crews, management focus, customer relations and public relations support?

Response:

Conference calls were held three times per day to assess damage and repair requirements. Assessments were made as to the need, time and location for additional personnel. See STAFF 1-22.

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STAFF 1-34: Please identify post-storm activities completed and those still to be completed, with a schedule for completion times (e.g., for ramp down, internal critiques of lessons learned, industry-shared results of lessons learned, debris removal, cleanup efforts, post-event related tree trimming, replacement of any temporary repairs put in place to expedite restoration).

Response:

Maintenance and repair of generators is complete.  
Restocking of cable and hardware is complete.  
Making permanent repairs which were temporary are ongoing.  
Additional damage assessment and wiring repair is occurring as snow and ice melt.

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STAFF 1-35: Please provide any internal post-December 2008 ice storm reports that your company has prepared that include, for example, summaries of experience, lessons learned, total outages reported, steps taken to address post-storm restoration, etc.

Response:

TDS has no formal reports outside of follow-up conference calls, updates to the Field Services Disaster Recovery Plan if needed, and coordination of all additional clean-up work, i.e., seasonal locations.