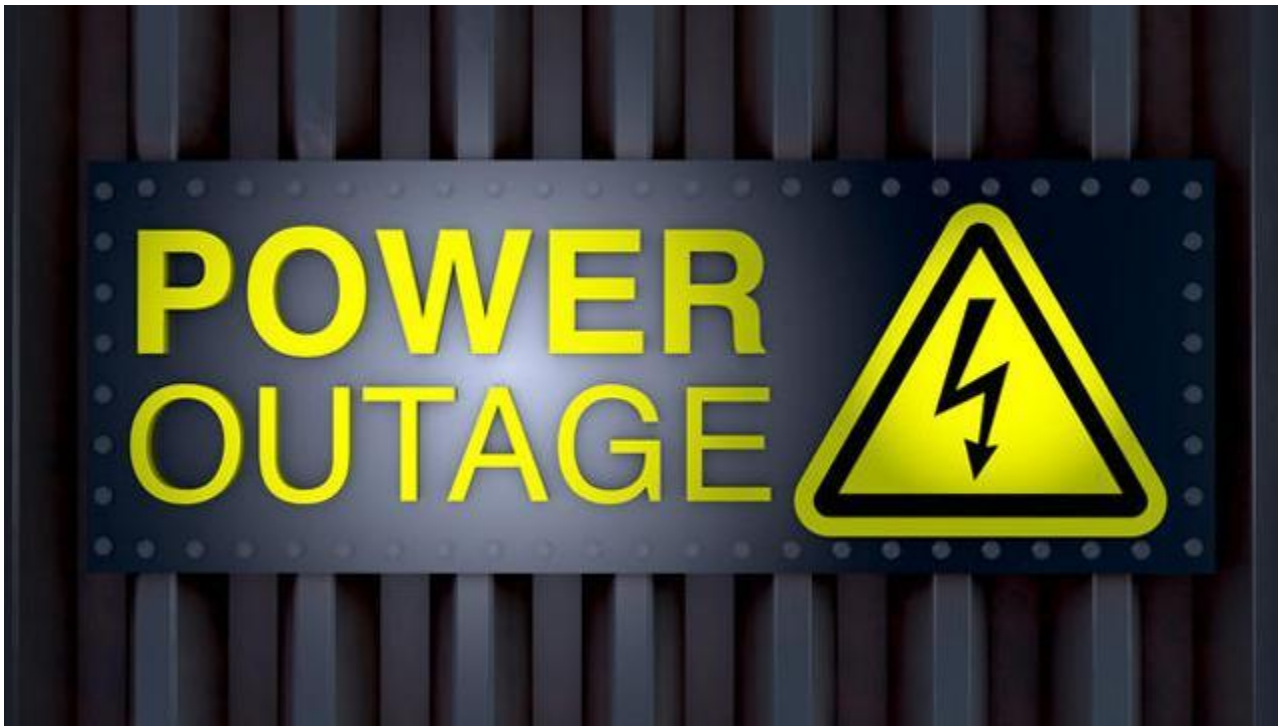


# Ameren seeking answers for this morning's power outage

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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ALTON - As many as 5,200 Ameren Illinois customers in Alton lost power this morning, and the company is still seeking the cause.

All but one Ameren Illinois customer in the area had their power restored through switching by 9:15 a.m. - less than an hour after the outage was first reported at 8:35 a.m. The final Ameren Illinois customer to regain power had it restored by 10:20 a.m. As of now, Ameren Illinois Communications Executive Brian Bretsch said the cause of the outage is under investigation, with crews patrolling the lines and inspecting the substations near the area of the outage.

With wind chills predicted to be as low as negative 18 tonight, losing power could be devastating, and downright dangerous. To help protect Ameren Illinois customers, and anyone reading this who may lose power during frigid temperatures, Bretsch provided a list of things to remember if power is lost during a winter storm or dangerous cold.

- Turn off lights and unplug appliances to prevent damage and overloading circuits once the power is restored.
- Keep faucets on at a drip to prevent pipes from freezing.
- Dress warm, and in layers.
- Close doors to unused rooms in the house.
- Be cautious when using alternative heat sources, and keep rooms properly ventilated.
- Block cold air from coming in by stuffing towels underneath doors.
- Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) for electrical outlets can help prevent injuries and electrocutions when installed in areas that may be affected by melting snow or ice. You can also purchase portable GFCIs for your emergency supply kits.