

O'Connell Electric Co. Preparing Technicians to Help Communities Effected by Hurricane Irma



O'CONNELL ELECTRIC COMPANY

Technicians and linemen from [O'Connell Electric Co.](#), a TEGG franchise in New York, are traveling to Lake City, Fla., to support areas of the southeast that will be impacted by Hurricane Irma as early as this weekend.

About 60 technicians in 20 O'Connell Electric Co. trucks left for northern Florida on Thursday, Sept. 7, and plan to help with recovery efforts. The technicians come from O'Connell's three New York locations in Victor, Syracuse and Jamestown.

Randy Fletcher, General Foreman for O'Connell Electric Co., [told local news station 13 WHAM](#) that O'Connell Electric Co. has a mutual aid agreement with Florida Power and Light to provide assistance after storms or other catastrophic events.

"They could be gone for three to four weeks, depending on how bad the storm is," Fletcher said. "If they get done in Florida and there is more damage in another state, Florida Power and Light will release them to another area. This could be a pretty long call."

Fletcher said if hotels aren't available, the technicians plan to either stay in tents or their trucks while working.

O'Connell Electric Co. employees are no strangers to aiding communities after natural disasters. After Hurricane Sandy struck the east coast in 2013, O'Connell Electric Co. dispatched 116 workers, its equipment and vehicles to Long Island and Brewster, NY, where they worked for days to help restore power to the storm-damaged areas.

Technician Adam Blum said he had worked on recovery efforts during Hurricane Sandy, which kept O'Connell Electric Co. crews about four weeks.

"We're expecting to be gone for a while – this one might even be worse," Blum [told 13 WHAM](#). "It's tough, but you have to put everything aside and prepare for what's coming ahead. You kind of expect to rough it, but it is part of the job. We're going to take it day by day, and job by job."

[Hurricane Irma](#), a category-five storm that experts are categorizing as one of the strongest storms ever recorded over the Atlantic Ocean, first made landfall on Sept. 5 on the southern Caribbean island of Barbuda, leveling nearly 95 percent of its buildings.

The storm, which brought winds of up to 185 mph, made landfall in southern Florida on Saturday, Sept. 9, and went north, along the Gulf coast of Florida, according to the [National Hurricane Center](#).

On Thursday, Sept. 7, Florida Gov. Rick Scott called for evacuations, cautioning that Hurricane Irma could be more damaging than Hurricane Andrew in 1992, according to ongoing reports from the [New York Times](#).

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Crews from O'Connell Electric Co. are traveling to Florida to aide in Hurricane Irma recovery efforts.