

State PRC sets severe weather utilities rules

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The Public Regulation Commission (PRC) voted 5-0 on Tuesday (Nov. 27) to require New Mexico's regulated gas and electric utilities to follow stricter emergency response protocols during severe weather events.

The rule follows a PRC report on severe weather impacts published in December 2011 after an extreme cold snap in February that year caused a wide-sweeping gas outage affecting thousands of consumers, including Taos County.

Among the new PRC guidelines, utilities must implement emergency plans that: "identify escalating levels of emergency response that may be needed; contain a plan for communicating with customers, government agencies, emergency response entities and the public; and designate a point of contact for emergency communication."

"We can't predict when disaster will strike, but we can help ensure our gas and electric utilities are better prepared for it when it does," said PRC Chairman Patrick Lyons in a prepared statement.

To view a copy of the PRC's report, visit [www. nmprc.state.nm.us/utilities](http://www.nmprc.state.nm.us/utilities)