



Dealing With Damage To Electrical & HVAC Systems After A Natural Disaster

Natural disasters in Texas can range from not enough rain to too much at once, and from ice storms to hurricanes – and anything in between. Homes and businesses can experience damage that requires professional assistance to repair or restore service.

Water-Related Damage

Standing water can damage electrical systems and air conditioning and heating systems. Sometimes, that damage is not obvious, so it's important to have those systems evaluated by a licensed electrician and licensed air conditioning contractor before they are placed back into service.

- If there's still standing water near the building and electrical wires are down, stay out of the water – if the wires are live, you could be electrocuted. Also watch out for power lines on the ground.
- Before going into the building, make sure that power is turned off. A power company representative or a licensed electrical contractor can assist with this – don't do it yourself.
- Any equipment that was wet should be thoroughly dried – and evaluated by a licensed electrical contractor – before you try to turn it back on.
- Any equipment that was flooded should be replaced.
- A licensed air conditioning contractor should check indoor and outdoor refrigeration connections and control circuits before you put the system back into service. If flood water repositions a split air conditioning and heat pump system, refrigerant leaks can develop, most likely requiring major repairs or replacement. Deciding whether to repair or replace a damaged unit will depend on the cost involved.

- Intact refrigerant systems that were affected by flooding should be cleaned, dried and disinfected to prevent the spread of mold and other allergens throughout the home or business.

Wind-Related Damage

If your home or business's electrical systems are damaged during a natural disaster or other event, it's important to make sure your electrical system is evaluated by a licensed professional before turning electricity back on in the building.

- A licensed air conditioning contractor should check indoor and outdoor refrigeration connections and control circuits before you put the system back into service.
- If high winds reposition a split air conditioning and heat pump system, refrigerant leaks can develop, most likely requiring major repairs or replacement. Deciding whether to repair or replace a damaged unit will depend on the cost involved.

A WORD ABOUT PORTABLE GENERATORS

- If you're using a generator, make sure to follow safety recommendations.
- NEVER operate a gas-powered generator inside your building or within 20 feet of a door or window.
- Don't connect generators to your building's electrical circuit if they don't have automatic-interrupt devices.
- Having a working carbon monoxide detector is important if you're using a generator. Some carbon monoxide detectors may not operate if the electricity is out. You can purchase a battery operated personal device for less than \$60.

ELECTRICAL & HVAC SYSTEMS REPAIR POST-DISASTER CONSUMER PROTECTION