

# Texas had the most power outages in the country in last 5 years, new report finds

houstonchronicle.com (<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/business/energy/article/texas-leads-nation-power-outages-18887152.php>) · by Claire Hao



Texas experienced the most power outages of any state in the country from 2019 to 2023, according to a report from Payless Power analyzing Department of Energy data.

Jason Fochtman/Staff photographer

As the nation's energy capital, it's no surprise Texas ranks first in many energy-related metrics. One of those, unfortunately, turns out to be the number of power outages across the country over the last five years.

There have been 263 power outages across Texas since 2019, more than any other state, each lasting an average of 160 minutes and impacting an estimated average of 172,000 Texans, according to an analysis by electricity retailer Payless Power (<https://paylesspower.com/blog/blackout-tracker/>). California ranked second with 221

outages from 2019 to 2023, while Washington placed third with 118, according to Adi Sachdeva, data researcher at Payless Power. The report was based on data from the Department of Energy.

More than a third of Texas' outages in the past five years occurred during 2021, when a Valentine's Day freeze led to widespread outages and the deaths of at least 210 people (<https://comptroller.texas.gov/economy/fiscal-notes/archive/2021/oct/winter-storm-impact.php#:~:text=Uri%27s%20Economic%20Toll,damage%20and%20forgone%20economic%20opportunities.>). According to the report, there were 47 outages in February 2021 and 91 all across Texas that year.

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The data reveals a paradox that's become a common point of frustration (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Z4xmNB0eJ0>): Texas is the national leader in energy production (<https://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=TX>), yet the state's aging power grid struggles to keep the lights on.

Mass outages such as the one during the 2021 freeze – which the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, the state's grid operator, initiated to prevent electricity demand from overwhelming available supply – are rare. Typically, the outages Texans experience are localized and caused by damage to power lines, which in the Houston area are owned by CenterPoint Energy.

The Texas power grid is among the worst in the country when it comes to grid malfunctions, according to Bob Marshall, CEO of Whisker Labs, a company that develops sensors to prevent home electrical fires that also collect data to measure faults on local grids.

Malfunctions measured by Whisker Labs sensors can be caused by utility poles or other grid equipment failing, wires touching wires, wires touching poles, wires pulling loose, wires breaking or vegetation touching wires, he said.

“The CenterPoint grid is amongst the most challenged that we see,” Marshall said, compared to other utilities in not just Texas but across the country. “Houston has the most power outages that we measure in the country, by far.”

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Power outages – and catastrophes such as wildfires

(<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/business/energy/article/xcel-texas-smokehouse-creek-fire-18710836.php>) – are becoming greater risks for utilities as the nation’s power grid infrastructure, much of which was installed more than 50 years ago

(<https://www.energy.gov/gdo/articles/what-does-it-take-modernize-us-electric-grid#:~:text=Much%20of%20the%20U.S.%20electric,growing%20building%20and%20transportation%20electrification.>), buckles under surging electricity demand and more extreme weather events. That was confirmed in the Payless Power analysis: The number of outages nationally from 2019 to 2023 was 93% higher than the previous five years, Sachdeva said.

The Public Utility Commission of Texas, the state’s utility regulator, is requiring Texas utilities to file resiliency plans (<https://interchange.puc.texas.gov/Search/Filings?ControlNumber=55250>) this year for the first time. These plans would lay out each utilities’ strategies to reduce outages and otherwise harden their infrastructure against weather-related events.

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