

## **Charter Communications Tropical Storm Irene Hearing Questions**

### **Utility Companies**

- **Preparation**

- What are the best practices for readiness? Response?
- Documented all employees at the start of their shift and confirmed with them at the end of their shift, to confirm all employees were safe.
- Documented all on line devices prior to storm, this helped us stay accountable to all lost devices after the storm.
- Immediately set up all necessary personnel in a conf room in Newtown CT and labeled it our war room which all communications passed through.
- As soon as storm passed we documented all of our Flat Lined Nodes. From there we put generators on those power supplies that fed flat lined nodes that were feeding neighborhoods that still had commercial power.
- Had all of our Head ends confirmed either up on commercial power, if not on commercial power, confirmed our stand by generators were up and properly operating.
- We moved generators from different parts of New England as well as had a trailer full of generators driven to us from our Alabama Systems.
- We designated on staff member to be the point of contact with the power Co as well as the emergency response center.
- Our construction Coordinators as well as other personnel road off our system immediately and documented all damaged areas, which we documented on one tracking sheet.
  
- How did you fare for readiness? Response?
  
- Readiness: We began our preparation three days prior to the storm event. We had several conference calls throughout the days leading up to the storm. To assure we had enough employee resources, vehicles had proper tools and equipment levels on them. Those facilities that we needed manned were so. We gassed up all of our vehicles, and all portable generators and those generators that supply back up power to our facilities. We also set up fueling schedules with our oil vendors to assure those generators stayed fueled throughout the event. We set up a War room in our Newtown facility and stocked room with all necessary information to assure the quickest restoration to our customers as possible.
  
- Response: We began restoration as soon as the storm cleared and we were assured our employees would be working in a safe environment. We responded to areas we could restore services within the first hour of the storm clearing, in most cases the only customers we were not able to get on in the first 24 hours after the storm were areas that were not safe due to commercial power on the ground or trees making roadways impassable.

- What was the damage from Tropical Storm Irene? How many lines were affected? How many customers were affected?
- We had 800 individual homes that needed new lines to the home.
- 280 plant damage locations, customers affected in these locations was approx 5,600
  
- What are your standards in regards to tree trimming? Have these standards changed over the past 10 years?
- We are only a Licensee on the poles we are attached to. The tree trimming is the Licensors responsibility
  
- Staffing/Labor
  - How many line crews were deployed during peak restoration?
  - 85 Charter technicians
  - 30 Contract Partner Technicians
  - 
  - How many line crews were brought in from other places, if any?
  - 5 Charter Technicians from MA
  - How many line crews are employed by your company now vs. 2000?
  - 85 CT Technicians now in 2011 vs. 60 CT Technicians in 2000
  - What are your policies/standards regarding hours of work (hours/shift)?

In order to ensure a safe working environment for all technicians and absent any unusual circumstance, Charter will not allow employees to work more than 16 hours in a 24-hour period. The 24-hour period begins at the start of the employee's scheduled work shift. The exception to this limitation is where there is a system emergency, which requires advance approval of the KMA Technical Operations Manager or Engineering Manager. We maintained enough coverage 24 hours throughout the storm which allowed us to adhere to this policy.

- Communication
  - How was the communication between your company and municipalities?
    - What worked? What didn't?
    - How could this communication be improved?
- A close working relationship with the local power company, Connecticut Light & Power, was in place in order to safely expedite any repairs and restore service to any network damage from the storm.

**Aftermath of Hurricane Irene:** Charter crews were dispatched immediately after the storm cleared to assess and repair storm-related damage to its network and to begin the process of safely and quickly restoring service.

We were in constant communication with our teams on the ground as well as with the power companies to coordinate repairs to our attachments where their utility poles may have experienced damage during the storm. Due to the severity of storm damage, flooding in remote areas were still looking to be cleared for access, and sustained power outages.

- How was the communication between your company and your customers?
  - What worked? What didn't?
  - How could this communication be improved?

#### **Charter – Communication Preparations/Outreach**

##### **Venues of Customer Communication:**

- **IVR (Phone) ambushing** - Today is XXX... Due to the impacts of Hurricane Irene we continue to have numerous outages and cable lines down in your area. Crews are working steadily on restoration of services. Please note services cannot be restored until power has been restored to an area. If you have a cable line down or require further assistance, please hold on the line for an advisor. (note: this played in the affected towns)
- **Charter.com** - Hurricane Irene caused extensive damage to communities along the East Coast. Charter crews are working to restore service following power restoration to safely expedite repairs. Please notify us if you have a cable line down. Charter customers can call 1-888-Get-Charter with service related questions, email: [CharterRecovery@chartercom.com](mailto:CharterRecovery@chartercom.com) or contact us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).
- **Crawl Message Outreach** – Charter put into place a crawl message on *The Weather Channel* for Charter customers to notify us of a downed cable line to our 1-888-Get-Charter customer service number or to: [CharterRecovery@chartercom.com](mailto:CharterRecovery@chartercom.com).
- **Real time updated disaster document** - for internal employee use, to provide most up to date information to customers via phone, chat, payment centers, social media, and escalations teams.

- **Letter to New England Customers (Post Irene) from Greg Garabedian, Vice President and General Manager New England - September 2, 2011: Letter read:**  
Dear Valued Charter Customer:

We hope that you and your families are finding your way back to life the way it was before Hurricane Irene. You are in our thoughts as we continue to work around the clock to restore services.

Charter took extraordinary steps before the hurricane arrived, to prepare our teams and our network, in order minimize the storm's impact on each of you. As a result, we are pleased to report that our network remained operational.

Our teams have been working hard to restore services, and at this point, we have restored service to the vast majority of our customers. However, we continue to work with power companies to complete restoration of services to *all* of you and appreciate your patience and understanding during this difficult time.

If you are still without power in your home, please check with your local power company on restoration timelines. Once power is restored, if you continue to experience service issues, please contact Charter for an appointment by calling **1-888-Get-Charter** (1-888-438-2427). We are committed to restoring services to every customer as quickly and safely as possible.

Thank you for your patience and thank you for choosing Charter.

#### **New Practices:**

- **Door Tags** – Charter Technicians were out assessing the damage where cable drops were down, then proceeded to leave a door tag at the customers home to let them know we have been out to their home/area and are aware of the issue and working on restoring service.
- **Communications on Remedy Ticket:** Working on advancing information that is in KMS (Internal data base of knowledge for our Customer Care reps) to provide the most up-to-date information on the outage and cause to provide to customers more detail on the issue at their home/area.

#### **Media Outreach:**

- Press Releases sent to all local media contacts in the New England Charter serviceable areas. First release sent on August 26, 2011 as Charter prepared for Hurricane Irene. Followed by a press release on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011 in the aftermath of the storm as Charter crews were out assessing and repairing Hurricane Irene damage and working around the clock to restore service to

affected customers. Charter press outreach continued on September 1<sup>st</sup> as Charter's Mobile Unit helped CT residents stay in touch in the aftermath of Irene.

- The releases went into detail the Charter safeguards put in place to stabilize its workforce and network in preparation for the storm's impact. We closely tracked the storm's path, and took the necessary precautions to ensure that our employees were prepared, in order to make sure any service interruptions to customers were limited.
- Charter's storm preparation plan included an internal employee alert system, as well as insuring all Charter facilities in the path of the storm were properly stocked with equipment and resources readied at staging areas in safe locations. Suppliers of fiber and cable also were notified to be on stand-by alert.
- Special service attention was given to hospitals, government and community facilities that depend on uninterrupted Charter services.
- Charter team was equipped with additional stand-by generators, cable and materials needed to help maintain services impacted by the storm and had additional crews on alert and ready to mobilize if any network damage occurs.

**Charter Mobile Unit:**

Charter assisted area residents without phone or internet services at its mobile communications trailer, located at 1 Jillson Square in Willimantic, CT from September 1st through September 9th.

Utilizing our communications trailer helped our neighbors in this community to connect with relatives and outside resources until all services are fully restored. The temporary mobile communications trailer, offered complimentary phone and internet service to all Willimantic residents and those in surrounding communities who were without services, due to the storm. Charter technicians and customer service representatives were on hand to staff the trailer, assisting residents with questions, concerns and equipment needs the following week. Our schedule was as follow for the Charter mobile trailer operations.

Thursday, Sept 1	2PM to 5PM
Friday, Sept 2	8 AM to 5 PM
Saturday, Sept 3	8 AM to 3 PM
Sunday, Sept 4	8AM to 5 PM
Monday, Sept 5	8 AM to 5 PM
Tuesday, Sept 6	8 AM to 5 PM

Wednesday, Sept 7	8 AM to 7 PM
Thursday, Sept 8	8 AM to 5 PM
Friday, Sept 9	8 AM to 5 PM

The Charter Mobile Unit information was announced in the local Northeastern CT newspapers and on the local radio station letting residents know about the Charter Mobile Unit and hours of operation.