



Department of Public Works

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Commissioner of Public Works

For Immediate Release
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DPW Storm Operations Ongoing
Severity of weather affects response time as more storms expected

The City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works (DPW) continues its response to an extreme weather event that occurred the evening of Tuesday, August 10, 2021.

DPW Forestry has a major role in this storm response. Forestry immediately called in staff last night with 33 field staff and management with 29 pieces of equipment deployed overnight. Forestry continued its work with a different team during the daytime with 54 field staff and management with 30 pieces of equipment.

By noon today, the City of Milwaukee Unified Call Center (UCC) received nearly 1,000 reports of downed trees from the public. The majority of those reports were of a critical nature which includes downed trees/branches in the public right of way (sidewalks, streets and driveways) or those that have fallen on buildings, houses, or vehicles. Forestry is prioritizing those critical locations in this ongoing operation. This storm brought additional conditions that can affect this response time. Downed wires in-or-near the work zone must be removed or de-energized before crews can safely begin cleanup. Additionally, forecasted storms this evening mean crews would pause operations to ensure safety. While Forestry will continue to address tree clearing as long as conditions are safe, the full cleanup from the Tuesday storm may take a week or more.

Meantime, Sanitation crews are assisting by picking up smaller branches along their routes, in addition to fielding requests for brush collection of residential piles up to 2 cubic yards. Brush pickup request response times may be delayed due to the high demand.

Electrical Services also called in personnel in the overnight hours. Due to the high number of power outages, a significant portion of signalized intersections went dark. Our staff installed temporary stop signs at as many locations as possible until no more signs were available. Additionally a number of streetlighting overhead lines were downed by trees. Due to safety concerns, work on overhead lines is only performed during daylight hours. This morning, a number of staff were redirected from their usual assignments to assist with these overhead repairs. A significant portion of the streetlights will not work until the issues are resolved; crews have been working most of the day to install additional temporary stop signs. We anticipate that more problems will reveal themselves once power is restored, and there is no way of knowing the full extent of the issues at this time.

Reminder, motorists are to treat traffic signals that are out or flashing as stop signs and be very mindful of pedestrians crossing.

As DPW prepares for additional storm activity this evening, Sewer Maintenance is ready to perform any work related to surface ponding, backwaters complaints, sanitary overflows or missing lids.

We ask for the public's patience in responding to the outcome of this severe weather event. And to report issues that need city service, the most efficient way is via the UCC by calling 286-CITY (2489) or through one of their digital channels found here <https://milwaukee.gov/ucc>.

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