

## Norwich crews help southern states battered by hurricanes: How it impacts local services

<https://www.norwichbulletin.com/story/news/local/2024/10/07/norwich-public-utilities-crew-florida-hurricane-milton-helene/75557232007/>

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While the [Norwich Public Utilities crew sent to support areas impacted by Hurricane Helene](#) returned Friday afternoon, another crew was sent out Sunday.

NPU sent Electric Maintenance Manager Tony Rizzi, Chief Lineman Jeff Burgess, and Lineman Kramer Sullivan from Norwich to Orlando, Florida, ahead of Hurricane Milton. They are expected to arrive Tuesday evening, a Monday release stated.

The Orlando Utility Commission (OUC), anticipating widespread power outages, requested that NPU provide mutual aid. The NPU crew was sent with crews from Holyoke and Boylston, Massachusetts, as a response from Northeast Public Power Association (NEPPA) and the American Public Power Association.

“As long as there will be no impact on our operations or customers, NPU always tries to respond to requests for mutual aid from our friends and fellow municipal utilities,” Chris LaRose, NPU general manager, said in the press release.

Crews get time-and-a-half pay while on storm duty. With mutual aid, the cost is paid for by the utility receiving help, not the power company sending the workers. This arrangement is worked out in advance, per the NEPPA contract, Communications and Community Outreach Manager Chris Riley said.

“While the work is challenging, first and foremost is the safety of our crews and making sure they’re not just working safely, but keeping the community safe,” he said.

A total of 15 NEPPA utilities are providing mutual aid in Florida, the press release states.

The OUC is the second largest municipal utility in Florida and 14th largest municipal utility in the country, providing services to over 240,000 customers.

### Mutual aid after Hurricane Helene

NPU’s latest mutual aid effort follows [assistance provided in the wake of Hurricane Helene. NPU crews were first sent to Oxford, Georgia, and then to McCormack, South Carolina](#). Crew members switched off during the response, but NPU maintained a crew of three.

That crew returned to Norwich Friday afternoon, Riley said.

### Hurricane Milton

As of Monday, Hurricane Milton is another Category 5 hurricane, moving at 160 miles per hour. Though it may weaken, it will still be a strong hurricane on landfall. Florida communities already battered by Hurricane Helene will experience heavy rains ahead of Milton. The storm is expected to reach Florida on Wednesday, [USA Today reported Monday](#).