

Memo to: Mayor and Village Board of Trustees
From: Janine King, Village Manager
Date: August 17, 2020
Subject: Con Edison's response to Tropical Storm Isaias

On Tuesday, August 4th, the Village was impacted by Tropical Storm Isaias, which was a strong tropical storm with winds up to 60 MPH. These winds impacted the Village for approximately seven to eight hours. The effects of the storm were significant, including thousands of power outages.

The Village participated in preparatory Con Edison conference calls on Monday and Tuesday before the storm hit. On these conference calls, we were told of the utility's preparations for the storm, which included having crews on call beginning Tuesday morning and requesting a limited number of mutual aid crews to respond to New York for expected storm cleanup. After the Tuesday morning conference call, the Village proactively requested a municipal liaison from Con Edison. The purpose of the municipal liaison is for the Village to have one point of contact at Con Edison who can relay information from the Village to Con Edison and vice versa. Our liaison reported to the Municipal Building first thing Wednesday morning and remained with us in person every day through August 8th and virtually through the 12th. It is important for our residents to understand that the liaison does not have the power to direct crews or request additional crews, his role is to provide communication.

The first power outages were reported at approximately 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday along Hastings Avenue. More outages followed, and the numbers continued to increase throughout the afternoon and early evening. By 8 p.m., approximately 2,000 customers out of the 3,752 serviced by Con Edison were without power. A Con Edison crew worked in the Village Tuesday afternoon and evening and a number of these customers were restored by the Morning of August 5th.

In the storm, a number of critical Village facilities lost power, including the Municipal Building, DPW Garage, the well fields, the Grand Street Firehouse and the Upper N. Highland Booster Pump Station. The storm also resulted in over two dozen street closures in the Village, and many of these closures involved trees and wires, which required a Con Edison response before the road could be reopened. A cut and clear crew was assigned to the Village on August 5th and worked with DPW crews over the next 3 days to open roadways.

On the morning of August 6th, approximately 1,550 customers remained without power 36 hours after the storm. The Village only had one cut-and-clear crew which was continuing to clear streets for travel. A few dead-end streets remained blocked as well, which left residents effectively trapped. The Village was told by the liaison that three restoration crews were assigned to the Village and would be arriving to work. However, these crews did not materialize and it was later determined that Con Edison had reassigned these crews to other municipalities. Very little restoration work was completed on August 6.

By the afternoon of August 7, over 1,300 customers remained without power a full three days after the storm hit Croton. There were no restoration crews working in the Village; the lone cut-and-clear crew assigned to the Village continued their work. By the end of the day on Friday, there remained one road closure in the Village that required a Con Edison response.

On Saturday, the Village finally received its first mutual aid crews to begin restoration work. By the evening of August 8, approximately 1,200 customers remained without power in the Village. By Sunday, August 9, that number had dropped to 885 customers. Additional restoration crews were assigned to the Village to help make this happen.

By Monday, August 10 (six days after the storm impacted Croton), there were 16 Con Edison or mutual aid crews working in the Village to help restore power. Most Village critical facilities remained without power; the exception was the Village well fields, which were powered back up on Friday. By Monday evening, the Village was down to 176 customers without power. On Tuesday, August 11, a total of 32 crews were working in the Village to restore power. It was on this date that almost all of the remaining customers received their power back. The isolated outages that remained on Wednesday, August 12, were addressed and Croton officially had zero outages.

Con Edison exhibited a few major issues during this storm (some of which were repeated from Sandy and the major winter storms of 2018). Erroneous text messages stating power was restored, or that outages would take longer than they did, were sent numerous times. These messages resulted in individuals coming back home from relatives' homes or from hotels to find out they still had no power, as well as aggravation and stress for no reason. Con Edison additionally provided estimated times of restoration (ETR) that were unrealistic in the beginning of the storm aftermath, and then waited until the times passed before changing the ETRs. Some areas in the Village had their ETRs pushed back multiple times before receiving their power back. Finally, the issue that critical Village facilities were not restored until six days after the storm, was extremely problematic. The purpose of identifying and categorizing these facilities as critical is to ensure that Con Edison gets power back to them as soon as possible. The Village had to rely on generator power to run its critical facilities.

It was clear from this storm that Con Edison has not significantly improved its response to major storm damage and the issues dealt with during Superstorm Sandy, as well as the storms in 2018 still exist today. The Village staff looks forward to participating in post-storm discussions with both Con Edison and the Public Service Commission.