

## Fallen hemlock tree wipes out power in Sitka

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An old hemlock tree fell on a transmission line this weekend in Sitka, causing a three hour city wide power outage.

The outage started at 11:38 p.m. Friday(12/20/13) when the fallen tree broke an insulator on three main conductors that transfer hydro power from Green Lake and Blue Lake into town. The tree trunk is alongside Sawmill Creek Road between the Raptor Center and the Indian River bridge. Its proximity to the road made it easier for crews to respond. Power was completely restored by 3:15 a.m. on Saturday.

Christopher Brewton, the Utility Director for the City and Borough of Sitka, says they were able to figure out fairly quickly where the line had failed. "Our Blue Lake plant is manned 24/7 so we always have an operator on duty. So, typically on a system of outage of this magnitude they instantly know that there's big trouble. Calling and asking them what is going on isn't really in your best interest. That's going to slow down our restoration process."

Brewton says Sitkans should feel free to contact the Electric Department if they are the only ones experiencing an outage. But, if the entire neighborhood loses power, its best to wait it out.