

# DOES HALTON HILLS HAVE MORE POWER OUTAGES THAN THE REST OF HALTON?

**BRYAN MYERS**  
bmyers@metroland.com

According to the Ontario Energy Board's statistics, in 2018, residents of Halton Hills experienced about twice as many outages as the rest of Halton Region.

On average, residents spent about an hour and a half in the dark throughout the year.

With about 23,000 customers in a 281 square-kilometre area, a big part of the reason Halton Hills spends more time in the dark has to do with the ratio of overhead and underground lines throughout the municipality.

"The more overhead lines, the more susceptible to foreign interference," Art Skidmore, president and CEO of Halton Hills Hydro, said.

Unfortunately, converting overhead lines to underground isn't easy. In new developments,

**QUESTION: DOES HALTON HILLS HAVE MORE POWER OUTAGES THAN THE REST OF HALTON?**

**ANSWER: YES, WITH SIGNIFICANTLY MORE OVERHEAD POWER LINES THAN THE REST OF HALTON, MORE OUTAGES ARE LIKELY TO OCCUR.**

underground lines are laid alongside gas, sewer, and cable lines, but in established neighbourhoods it would be costly and disruptive.

"We'd be digging up people's yards," Skidmore said.

The leading cause of outages

across the municipality, however, is faulty equipment.

Utility infrastructure is run to failure, Skidmore said, and much of it comes with a 40 to 60-year lifespan.

When the municipality was amalgamated in the 1970s the existing infrastructure was inherited from Ontario Hydro.

"If you change that on a proactive basis it's going to translate into increased rates," Skidmore said.

In some cases, the utility company replaces infrastructure that could cause significant outages, like no-longer-manufactured combination streetlight-transfer poles.

"If one of those blows, residents will have a significant outage," Skidmore said.

After next year, only seven pole-transfers will be employed in Halton Hills.

Adverse weather was the sec-



Alexandra Heck/Metroland

While Halton Hills residents may see more outages than the rest of Halton, the reasoning has a lot to do with the ratio of overhead and underground lines in the municipality.

ond most common cause of outages in the region.

Skidmore said during a recent lightning storm, one transformer was struck by lightning and the power surged to adjacent transformers, damaging four in total.

Following weather, the third leading cause of outages in Halton Hills was tree contact, accounting for 14 outages in 2018. While trees are trimmed away from lines over a three-year cycle, taller trees can and do fall onto the lines causing outages.

Collisions with poles were another contributing cause of outages.

"They're often the longer ones to restore power," Jennifer Gordon, project manager for the utility company, said. "If there's a vehicle involved there are police involved in the investigation."

Vehicle collisions often cause enough damage to require poles to be completely replaced, prolonging outage lengths.

"Outages are a part of our business," Skidmore said. "There's no way as a distribution company we can guarantee 100 per cent power. There are too many foreign interference factors."

However, 52 employees provide round-the-clock support for Halton Hills Hydro's 9,100 hydro poles and 400 transformers.

Right now, the utility is seeking customer input to prioritize investments for the next five years. Residents can have their say online at [haveyoursay.haltonhillshydro.com](http://haveyoursay.haltonhillshydro.com).

## STORY BEHIND THE STORY:

After seeing a number of outages reported on Halton Hills Hydro's Twitter account, reporter Bryan Myers, compared the rest of Halton's utility companies via the Ontario Energy Board.

CUSTOM DESIGNS BY

## Kabinet Pro

From Modern to Contemporary to Traditional.  
Product & Design That Complement Your Life.

348 Guelph St.  
Georgetown

(Behind YoYo's,  
next to Cooper Standard)  
[www.kabinetpro.com](http://www.kabinetpro.com)  
905-702-7719



Authorized Dealer for

