



Observation	Follow-Up Action Item Number	Follow-up Action	Status	Q1 2024 Update
Observation 1 — Establishing Estimated Times of Restoration	1.1	Establish and train on a damage assessment process for emergency response.	Completed	To ensure a more complete and efficient damage assessment, Austin Energy established a new emergency response damage assessment process. The utility identified Damage Assessment Leaders and two-person Damage Assessment Teams and defined their roles for the restructured Incident Management Team (IMT). Damage Assessment Teams will report to the Service Branch Directors and will be assigned to provide detailed damage assessments for each impacted area during an activation. These assessments will supplement available situational reports, allowing operations to develop a systemwide estimated time of restoration for events.
Observation 2 — Communication Systems and Customer Experience	2.8	Evaluate Advanced Distribution Management System (ADMS) integrations to optimize communications with interfacing systems, such as Mobile Workforce Management (a work management ticket system also referred to as MWM) and Customer Care and Billing (the customer information system also referred to as CC&B).	Completed	As the integrated software platform providing real-time information for Austin Energy, ADMS integrates with the Austin Energy's CC&B system and its MWM system. Following Winter Storm Mara, Austin Energy performed an end-to-end evaluation of ADMS's performance and its current and planned integrations to CC&B and MWM. Austin Energy worked with its ADMS vendor to review and evaluate ADMS's overall system performance with respect to these integrations. This evaluation confirmed that ADMS's real-time integration to CC&B, for the purpose of obtaining customer status, is performing as intended. Austin Energy also confirmed that the ADMS integration with MWM to support the verification of planned work on meters is working as intended. These integrations provide necessary information to ADMS to prevent false outage notifications. Additionally, Austin Energy's evaluation determined that building new integrations to push ADMS data to CCB would be redundant as Customer Care staff can access ADMS status information through ADMS's WebCC module.
Observation 2 — Communication Systems and Customer Experience	2.11	Review and update workflows associated with restoration text alerts. Determine all the causes that can trigger the system to believe an outage is restored, and review operator processes that merge, close or group outage.	Completed	Following Winter Storm Mara, Austin Energy reviewed the workflows and communications associated with restoration text alerts. This review examined all causes that trigger the alert system to register that an outage has been restored, and the associated operator processes. These processes could impact the accuracy of customer restoration notifications as they merge, close or group outage incidents. It was determined that, after Austin Energy operations staff complete a repair and the repair is recognized by ADMS, the outage map is updated, and a corresponding text alert is sent to the associated customer. While the workflows were determined to operate properly, the associated communications could have been clearer in their information. To improve these standard customer alert messages, Austin Energy reviewed and revised these message templates for clarity. The revised and improved message templates are now a part of the application's product functionality. As the notification workflow was confirmed to operate as intended, the workflow was not changed.
Observation 3 — Public Communication	3.3	Designate a single point of contact as part of Incident Command to focus on elected official inquiries, district-specific situational awareness and escalations.	Completed	In 2023, Austin Energy's IMT established new Liaison Officer and Assistant Liaison Officer positions. These positions will coordinate with elected officials during incident activations. Duties for these new positions include gathering information in response to elected official inquiries and maintaining situational awareness for the region during activations.



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Observation 4 – Customer Care	4.3	Evaluate and improve coordination regarding the Medically Vulnerable Registry (MVR) pre-planning process.	Completed	In order to improve coordination regarding the MVR pre-planning process, Austin Energy established a two-way electronic communication system to quickly reach MVR customers. Through this system, Austin Energy can request and receive information on MVR customers' conditions and needs, and obtain customer authorization to share information with other agencies during an emergency. This communication improvement enables Austin Energy to identify and prioritize needs in accordance with available resources.
Observation 4 – Customer Care	4.6	Conduct outage call refresher training of essential workers and improve agent support	Completed	Austin Energy conducted outage call refresher training for all Customer Care essential workers. Further, each group has completed their support plan based on recent improvements to the IMT and changes in assignments. This was completed by all groups by Jan. 31. To improve agent support during incident activations, non-call center personnel will receive refresher training to handle outage calls and expand call center capability.
Observation 4 – Customer Care	4.7	Evaluate and optimize Utility Call Center (UCC) escalation case creation during emergency events.	Completed	Austin Energy evaluated the UCC escalation case creation process used during Winter Storm Mara. It was determined the use of case creation by the UCC should be suspended when the UCC becomes part of the IMT activation. In its place, procedures were established and job aids and training were created to provide UCC staff appropriate procedures to follow during emergency activations related to large scale outage events.
Observation 4 – Customer Care	4.9	Solicit customer feedback and suggestions for continuous improvement regarding long-duration outage events, and establish a plan to address concerns, as applicable.	Completed	The Austin Energy Corporate Communications team regularly engages with the community to solicit feedback related to both short- and long-duration outages and help inform process improvements in support of continuous improvement. Since Winter Storm Mara, Austin Energy has participated in 33 community events, reaching more than 2,500 customers. These are opportunities for Austin Energy to hear directly from customers about their outage experience and to pass along improvement opportunities to relevant workgroups within Austin Energy. Additionally, beginning in November 2023, Austin Energy initiated a post-outage customer satisfaction survey initiative. This survey (the Chartwell Tranzact Survey) is sent to select customers after they experience an outage. Customers are asked to provide feedback on the automated communications received during an outage, including any estimated time of restoration, and they are asked about their experiences with Austin Energy's Outage Map and Outage Alert systems. The Tranzact Survey also ends with an open-ended question asking customers if there are "any other ways Austin Energy can communicate with you or take action to better serve you." Survey results and feedback are reviewed regularly and will be used to identify areas for further communications improvement



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Observation 5 – Incident Command Operations	5.2	Evaluate activation procedures for gaps and provide refresher training to ensure all Incident Command (IC) staff are well trained. This will include conducting dry runs, drills and exercises.	Completed	Austin Energy's Emergency Management team evaluated the incident activation procedures for gaps and incorporated improvements to the process. The evaluation process included reviews of past Austin Energy activations and processes currently in place, as well as comparisons to other City of Austin activations. The evaluation also included interviews and conversations with Austin Energy staff who were activated during Winter Storms Uri and Mara. Changes implemented include increasing depth on the IMT, mandatory IMT assignments for Austin Energy staff, the use of Incident Command System (ICS) forms to develop Incident Action Plans (IAP) and the assignment of an Emergency Management Coordinator to coordinate the IMT year-round. Austin Energy is now conducting ICS training in-house, offering instructor-led training for Intermediate and Advanced ICS. The Austin Energy Emergency Management team now publishes an ICS training calendar to ensure that adequate introductory and refresher training is available for IMT staff. This calendar includes position-specific workshops, drills and exercises. It will be updated annually to ensure that all IMT staff are well trained and that participation expectations have been communicated.
Observation 5 – Incident Command Operations	5.4	Evaluate the essential status of all Austin Energy employees during emergency response and establish appropriate training and communication.	Completed	Austin Energy determined any Austin Energy employee could be deemed essential during an emergency response. Austin Energy is now defining specific roles and will use the terms "assigned" and "unassigned" during an emergency response. Additionally, to establish a clear understanding of expectations, the IMT roster was revised, expanded and disseminated to all IMT members. In addition, IMT members are trained for their roles and responsibilities, and Austin Energy has communicated to all IMT members that they are deemed essential. The utility will continue to expand the IMT roster as it develops additional units and resources, and team education measures will continue to be offered and required of IMT members.
Observation 7 – Damage Assessment	7.2	Re-evaluate how Austin Energy uses patrollers during these events to maximize productivity and train them accordingly.	Completed	With Austin Energy's new damage assessment process, the utility developed new strategies for Patrollers and Damage Assessment Teams. These teams will maximize productivity by gathering front-line information for restoration crews. The roles for each group have been identified and defined for the restructured IMT. During activations, Patrollers and Damage Assessment Teams will report to the Service Branch directors to perform initial, mid- and post-damage assessments on impacted circuits identified by System Operations. Approximately 140 employees have received initial damage assessment training. As training materials are further refined and developed, additional and refresher training – including job specific training – will be provided on an ongoing basis.



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Observation 8 – Restoration Coordination	8.3	Establish a mechanism to communicate the documentation reporting process to all sections prior to the event	Completed	Since Winter Storm Mara, Austin Energy retrained existing field staff on ADMS. Additionally, newly hired, promoted or transferred field staff receive initial or refresher ADMS training as appropriate. On an ongoing basis, Austin Energy will conduct ADMS refresher training for field staff at least twice annually, and training will include various scenarios and live demonstrations of the verification process.
Observation 9 – Response Planning	9.2	Establish a mechanism to communicate the documentation reporting process to all sections prior to the event.	Completed	Following Winter Storm Mara, Austin Energy established a mechanism to communicate the documentation reporting process to all sections. During Incident Command activations, specific units and/or sections within the IMT will be tasked with reporting relevant data. Required reporting is tasked to individuals within units/sections and completion is tracked by the Operations and Planning Sections Chiefs. The IMT Planning Section is responsible for appropriately documenting these reporting statistics for immediate dissemination within the IMT command structure.
Observation 10 – Tree Trimming/Vegetation Management Coordination	10.5	Define and communicate Austin Energy’s responsibilities versus other department and entity responsibilities for debris removal from customer properties.	Completed	Austin Energy will use various communication channels to update the public about current emergency conditions and will share applicable City of Austin information about debris removal through these channels. During emergency activations triggered by widespread storms in which vegetation is a significant factor in power restoration, Austin Energy will generally not remove brush or debris trimmed during electric system repair work. For City of Austin residents, Austin Energy’s tree trimming page – austinenergy.com/trees – has general information about storm response and brush removal, including a link to the Austin Resource Recovery’s residential guidelines and schedule for curbside brush collection.
Observation 12 – Collaboration with City of Austin Departments and Other Governmental Entities	12.1	Develop a better process for Liaisons to obtain and share status updates with Austin Energy Incident Command personnel on Emergency Operations Center (EOC) requests.	Completed	As part of its IMT restructure, Austin Energy updated the title of this team from EOC Liaisons to EOC Responders. This update reflects the differences between the roles of the Liaison Officer and EOC Responder. During an EOC activation, most inquiries to the EOC Responder primarily concern the status of outages at specific locations. To address those requests, assigned EOC Responders have completed in-person, instructor-led training on WebDMD. This tool is a read-only module of the ADMS used by support staff to assist those who deal with customer escalations and to improve emergency response safety, efficiency and communications. Austin Energy also created a supplemental computer-based training on WebDMD for new or additional EOC Responders on an as-needed basis.



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Observation 13 — Logistics Coordination and Supply Chain Management	12.2	Optimize collaboration between Austin Energy and Transportation Public Works (TPW) to mitigate the impacts of power outages on traffic signal operations. TPW is identifying and mapping power source pole locations to expedite.	Completed	Since Winter Storm Mara, Austin Energy initiated several projects with TPW to mitigate the impacts of power outages on traffic signal operations. TPW and Austin Energy conducted a tabletop training to discuss and improve emergency event restoration efforts. TPW also provided Austin Energy with an updated intersection list that identifies intersections that are a priority for public safety. Austin Energy also installed information tags in ADMS for intersections that were identified as the highest priority for visibility during power restoration efforts. Austin Energy and TPW will continue to collaborate to enhance public safety.
Observation 13 — Logistics Coordination and Supply Chain Management	13.3	Optimize the lodging procurement and coordination process.	Completed	Austin Energy Emergency Management staff maintains a lodging list for use during an IMT activation that covers service center proximity, cost and quality. Staff continue to investigate and pursue additional lodging and service contract opportunities to expand and coordinate lodging options. Austin Energy also has the ability to use the City of Austin hoteling contract for lodging during IMT activations.
Observation 13 — Logistics Coordination and Supply Chain Management	13.4	Re-evaluate the identification process and tracking system requirements to manage and coordinate logistic services during emergency response.	Completed	Austin Energy has reevaluated its identification process and tracking system requirements to better manage and coordinate logistic services. As part of the National Incident Management System framework and response, the use of an IAP to track, manage and coordinate services during emergency response can improve Austin Energy’s logistics performance. IAPs help facilitate the provision of services (such as the identification of appropriate staff to receive room and board) and the assignment of staff (such as identification of drivers and runners and those available to act as site coordinators during activations). Using a commercially available software application, IAPs can be generated within the system and shared throughout the organization. A project is underway to implement that software application to facilitate the use of IAPs within the utility. As Austin Energy works to obtain the preparedness and response software, the utility is coordinating response activities through multiple mediums to produce IAPs, including face-to-face meetings, Teams and Webex applications, SharePoint and paper hard copies of ICS forms.
Observation 13 — Logistics Coordination and Supply Chain Management	13.6	Implement third-party review of Austin Energy critical facility backup generators, and establish a maintenance plan for fuel testing.	Completed	Austin Energy performed a third-party review of backup generators at critical facilities on Nov. 29, 2023. The report states the generators onsite are capable of handling the load at the reviewed critical facilities. It also states the peak demand measured at these facilities meets the minimum loading requirements for the generators as designed. The review also concluded the available capacity of the onsite generators can meet future load growth and a heavy use event. Quarterly preventive maintenance performed under a Citywide contract includes periodic fuel testing.



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Observation 14 — Financial Management	14.2	Establish a Emergency ProCard Incident Command Process	Completed	Following Winter Storm Mara, Austin Energy created a standard process to request and approve increases to ProCard authority limits when needed to ensure adequate credit availability for emergency purchases. During the initial activation, the Finance Section Chief and/or designee will convey the process verbally, via email and on the event SharePoint site to the Austin Energy Emergency Coordinator and all Emergency ProCard users. Further, Emergency ProCard users are required to complete and sign the Austin Energy Mastercard Purchasing Agreement, as well as read and adhere to Austin Energy's Emergency ProCard Policy.
Observation 14 — Financial Management	14.4	Ensure essential and designated response personnel have Emergency ProCards.	Completed	Following Winter Storm Mara, Austin Energy conducted an audit of all existing designated Emergency ProCard holders and identified a need for additional response personnel to receive cards. Applications for additional Emergency ProCards were submitted, received and processed. The Emergency ProCards were issued to the applicants for use during officially declared Incident Management Team activations.