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Don't Let Balloons Float Up and Take Down Power This Valentine's Day
FirstEnergy reminds customers to be careful with helium-filled balloons

AKRON, Ohio – As Valentine's Day approaches, FirstEnergy Corp. (NYSE: FE) is reminding customers to handle helium-filled foil balloons safely to keep power flowing this season and year-round. Foil balloons cause power outages when released outdoors because their metallic coating conducts electricity and poses a risk to the electric system.

A video discussing the hazards posed by foil balloons is available on [FirstEnergy's YouTube channel](#) and media can download [soundbites on Dropbox](#).

February typically marks the onset of an increase in outages caused by metallic balloons, as they float off from Valentine's Day gifts. Last year, foil balloons were to blame for 109 power outages across FirstEnergy's service area:

- The Illuminating Company – 13 balloon-related outages
- Ohio Edison – 18 balloon-related outages
- Toledo Edison – 9 balloon-related outages
- Met-Ed – 18 balloon-related outages
- Penelec – 8 balloon-related outages
- Penn Power – 1 balloon-related outage
- West Penn Power – 12 balloon-related outages
- Mon Power – 3 balloon-related outages
- Potomac Edison – 5 balloon-related outages

- JCP&L – 22 balloon-related outages

Lisa Rouse, Director of Distribution System Operations at FirstEnergy: "While our community outreach has helped reduce balloon-related outages from previous years, people of all ages can help keep the lights on in our local communities by understanding the steps to take to eliminate the dangers posed by foil balloons."

To help ensure holidays and celebrations are enjoyed responsibly, it is important to keep these safety tips in mind:

- Use caution and avoid celebrating with metallic balloons near overhead electric lines.
- Securely tie helium-filled metallic balloons to a weight that is heavy enough to prevent them from floating away. Do not remove the weight until the balloons are deflated.
- Puncture and deflate metallic balloons once they are no longer in use. Never release them into the sky.
- Never attempt to retrieve any type of balloon, kite or toy that becomes caught in a power line. Leave it alone and immediately call FirstEnergy at 888-544-4877 to report the problem.
- Stay far away from a downed or low-hanging power line. Always assume downed lines are energized and dangerous. Report them ASAP by calling 911.

FirstEnergy is dedicated to integrity, safety, reliability and operational excellence. Its electric distribution companies form one of the nation's largest investor-owned electric systems, serving more than six million customers in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, West Virginia, Maryland and New York. The company's transmission subsidiaries operate more than 24,000 miles of transmission lines that connect the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic regions. Follow FirstEnergy online at www.firstenergycorp.com and on X [@FirstEnergyCorp](https://twitter.com/FirstEnergyCorp).

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