



South Portland Squirrel Knocks Out Power to Thousands of Customers, Shuts Down Schools

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A squirrel caused thousands of power outages and school closings in South Portland, Maine and other parts of the state Thursday, the Portland Press Herald reported. Central Maine Power Co. finally restored the power of about 6,700 customers in South Portland, 200 customers in Cape Elizabeth and 1,500 customers in Portland after a squirrel got into a South Portland substation, the Portland Press Herald reported. The power outages caused public schools in South Portland to close for the day, the outlet reported. “Since most of the city is currently without power, we are unable to hold classes remotely,” South Portland Superintendent Ken Kunin said in an email to parents, according to the Portland Press Herald. “We are aware that more than one third of homes and five out of eight schools are without power.” CMP had attempted to switch customers to a different circuit and move to a mobile substation if needed, WGME 13 reported. Locating and repairing the damage can be lengthy because the substations are energized and dangerous, and the recovery work needs to be done methodically, CMP spokesperson Catharine Hartnett told the Portland Press Herald.

A CMP spokesperson told WGME CBS 13 that animals cause about 20 percent of all power outages every year, WGME CBS 13 reported.

“We’re installing little mechanisms to prevent squirrels from making that electrical contact, ending their own lives and creating those power outages,” CMP spokesperson Catharine Hartnett told WGME CBS 13.