

note

90 views

Electricity Shut-off in the News

The following article was in today's **New York Times**. It raises some issues that are relevant to our Power Company assignment.









<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/09/nyregion/woman-dies-oxygen-tank-electricity.html>

hw8

Updated 14 hours ago by Alexa Langford and Laura Schultz

followup discussions for lingering questions and comments

☒ Resolved ☐ Unresolved

-  **Chunxia Cao** 14 hours ago
This is terrible. I guess we'd better consider this as one of the cost for shutting off power.
-  **Rajat Kashyap** 11 hours ago I think we should collect medical information on the customer and include that as a parameter in model or just remove such cases for any modelling for shutoffs
-  **Chunxia Cao** 11 hours ago I guess the company maybe due lawsuit fees. It may be or not be charged the medical fee
-  **Michael Goldstein** 10 hours ago this really goes to how important some missing data can be. The customer should always be contacted prior to shutoff and a data point would be 'medical emergency'. The article stated that the power company was told of the condition.
-  **Sam Marquez** 8 hours ago @Rajat It's a nice sentiment, but likely infeasible from a data privacy perspective. #1 it likely violates US law (HIPAA standards are quite strict on what medical information can be shared, and under what conditions). #2 people likely don't want their medical information collected by a power company (I know I wouldn't).
-  **Rajat Kashyap** 8 hours ago News says that the family did inform the company about the medical condition. May be that can be use for the model. So it wont be feasible to collect actual medical conditions but there can be a flag depending on if anyone in the family has medical emergencies. Just a thought
-  **kelly lester** 6 hours ago I would say being in the healthcare industry, that the feds in the US (under HIPAA) limit the access and exchange of medical information (PHI). Physicians cannot discuss a person's medical situation with family members or discuss without signed authorization from the person. I would suggest that if the temperatures are extreme it would be very risky for a power company to shut off anyone's power as even healthy people could suffer in extreme heat or cold. It would be risky for the power company to ask a customer, much less store the info in a database, about medical issues under HIPAA. The fines are about 25K per violation.
-  **Michael Goldstein** 2 hours ago as Rajat mentioned the article stated that the family told the power company and the power company said if they had known they would not have turned it off. Therefore, the power company is probably storing that info somewhere (probably not the specific medical condition). The HIPPA laws are for privacy of that data, so as long as the power company did not share the information and was not available then it would probably be okay. For example if customer service reps and technicians could not see the data, but a "black box" algorithm was able to see the information to exclude it from the "shut off" list it would probably be fine. But I am not a HIPPA expert.