

Dr.Decks: October Power Outage Puts Deck Lighting Limits in Focus

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TACOMA, WA - October 23, 2026 -

A substation issue cut power to thousands of customers in Tacoma, University Place and the Gig Harbor area on October 16, 2026, according to a local news report. Service to the two cities was restored that afternoon. For homeowners planning a deck for use after dark, the interruption makes a distinction clear: wired deck lights illuminate a route while power is available, but they are not emergency lighting without an independent backup. Dr.Decks offers deck lighting and railing installation in the Tacoma area.

The News Tribune report identified a problem at Tacoma Public Utilities' Pearl Street substation and followed the changing outage figures as service returned. Peninsula Light customers across the Narrows were also affected. Counts varied during the day; the story does not describe deck damage, a failed railing or an injury on outdoor steps. The relevance to deck owners is the loss of powered visibility, not a failed construction system.

A person may leave a back door, turn around a seating area, cross a landing and descend stairs. Light concentrated on attractive post caps may mark the perimeter without making each tread visible. A rail or guard defines an edge, but its physical function is different from illumination. A plan for evening use should address the transitions people actually walk through, not only the appearance of a lit outline.

Dr.Decks' lighting page lists post-cap, rail and step fixtures, as well as consultation, installation and automation. These are existing offerings, not a new product announced after the outage. The available information does not say the company supplies battery backup or that its installations were affected on October 16.

A post-cap light indicates a post; a step fixture addresses a stair; a rail fixture can draw attention to the deck edge. Placement, the direction of light and the path between fixtures matter more than the number of glowing points. A homeowner comparing a new deck or rerail design can ask to see where the door, landings, rail

turns and stair treads will be relative to the proposed lights. No configuration by itself guarantees that a person will never trip.

A timer can turn powered lights on at dusk, and a control can change when they operate, but neither provides electricity after the supply fails. A design relying on a household circuit should not be described as outage lighting without a separately specified, suitable backup. Ready.gov's power-outage advice tells households to keep flashlights for every person and plan for battery-powered alternatives. That is household preparation guidance, not a description of any Dr.Decks product.

A rail material, fixture mount and wiring route need to be compatible with the specific assemblies chosen for a new build. Step and rail locations should be drawn before the project reaches the point where access is closed off. For an existing deck, a proposed lighting addition or rerail depends on the actual structure and electrical scope. A general service list cannot settle where a cable may run or who is authorized to make a connection on a particular job.

During a live outage, the immediate source of information is the utility, not a deck plan. Tacoma Public Utilities provides outage reporting and restoration updates and warns that initial estimates may change. Its guidance says to stay away from downed lines. If exterior lights are out, a household needs a separate way to see and should avoid treating an unlit stair as though its usual fixtures were operating.

The afternoon restoration is not evidence of a lasting outage at any particular home. It nevertheless exposes a useful design boundary. Powered fixtures answer how a deck is seen on an ordinary evening. Flashlights or a separately established backup answer what happens when the utility supply disappears.

Dr.Decks offers new deck construction, railing installation and planned lighting in the Tacoma market. The October 16 outage gives those choices a sharper boundary. A deck layout can address ordinary evening visibility, while a household still needs a separate plan for unexpected darkness.

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