

Outage Preparedness



Tips for Before, During, and After a Power Outage!

Before a Power Outage:

Subscribe to text alert services from government officials. A common resource is Nixel. Text your zip code to 888777. Stay informed of local weather conditions!

Talk to your medical provider about a power outage plan for medical devices powered by electricity and refrigerated medicines. Find out how long medications can be stored at higher temperatures and get specific guidance for any medications that are critical for life!

Everyone should have a three-day supply of water available for use in emergencies. One to 3 gallons, per person, per day is recommended.

Have flashlights and extra batteries available in multiple rooms/areas. Using candles is not recommended! If you absolutely need to use candles, use extreme caution, especially around young children and pets.

Purchase thermometers for the refrigerator and freezer. Avoid opening the refrigerator and freezer doors repeatedly. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a full freezer will stay safely cold for 48 hours during a power outage, while a half-full freezer will last 24 hours. Food temperature at or below 40 degrees is usually safe to eat. If in doubt, toss it out!

Have regular or disposable coolers, ice, and a food/meat thermometer on hand to store refrigerator contents.

Know where the manual release lever for your garage door is located and how to use it.

Have a car charger available for your cell phone or consider purchasing a solar powered recharger. Always move your car outside of the garage to use because they release carbon monoxide.

Keep a list of emergency phone numbers, family members, and work contact numbers available in case your phone battery dies and you need to use a landline.

Have extra cash on hand as ATM's, credit card machines, and gas pumps may not work during the outage.

Keep a half tank of gas in your vehicle as a minimum to avoid running out during the outage.

Consider purchasing a generator. Always use generators outside of the home and garage because they release carbon monoxide. Connect the equipment you want to use directly into the outlet on the generator with heavy-duty extension cords. Never connect a generator directly to your home's electrical system! Contact a licensed contractor for assistance.

Consider installing a DC powered backup sump pump. Contact a licensed contractor for assistance.

During a Power Outage:

Communicate outages and downed power lines with your power company. Check breakers first! Also report if you know neighbors are without power.

Avoid downed power lines! Stay inside your car if a power line falls on your car and call for help.

If the outage lasts more than a couple of hours, place milk, other dairy products, meat, fish, eggs, gravy, and spoilable leftovers into a regular or disposable cooler surrounded by ice. Use a food/meat thermometer to check the temperature inside the cooler. Smaller containers completely full will remain cold longer.

Stay clear of power crews working – for everyone’s safety. Bystanders may get too close for the workers to continue and they will have to stop working, which slows down the process of restoring power!

If your house sustains damage to the electric service equipment, you may need to hire an electrician to assess the damage before power will be connected to your home again.

Unplug or switch off unnecessary lights and appliances to prevent overload or surges when the power is restored. Electronics, such as TVs and computers, are particularly sensitive. To prevent damage, unplug everything as soon as the power goes out. Keep one light on so you know when power is back on.

Outdoor grills are a good resource for cooking during outages. Always use them outdoors.

Keep a pail near the sump pump for any flooding that may occur due to the outage if you do not have backup power for the pump.

After a Power Outage:

Start plugging in and turning on essential appliances. Do not plug in everything at once, but gradually, to allow the system to stabilize.

Remove any items from the refrigerator and freezer that are not safe to eat.

These tips and more can be found at the following links:

<https://www.ready.gov/power-outages>

<https://www.publicpower.org/blog/12-tips-prepare-power-outages>

<https://www.energy.gov/articles/preparing-power-outage>

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/power-outage.html>

<https://simplefamilypreparedness.com/survive-3-day-power-outage/>

<https://www.heartland-rec.com/content/tips-extended-power-outage>

<https://www.electricgeneratorsdirect.com/stories/1701-What-to-Do-in-a-Power-Outage.html>